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MARCH 1994

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:

TERRY VENABLES

My path to the peak

WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

PART 1

ARGENTINA
BELGIUM
BOLIVIA
BRAZIL
BULGARIA
CAMEROON

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Latest international results, line-ups and tables

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Paulo FUTRE

Reggiana's flying winger may be out of action for the rest of the season with a knee injury but when it comes to transfer fees he is top of the table with a combined total fee of £20million.

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EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

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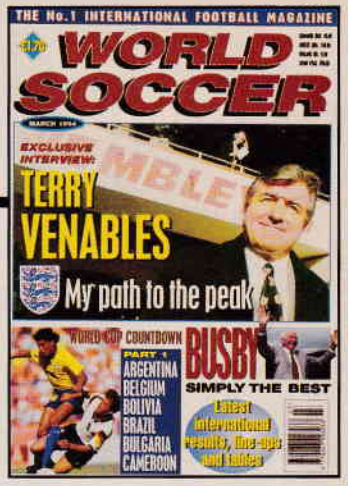

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TOP DOG ...at last!

Venables looks back at his path to the peak

INTERVIEW

TERRY VENABLES IS NOW AT THE SUMMIT OF THE ENGLISH SOCCER TREE AS NEW COACH OF THE NATIONAL TEAM. IN THIS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW HE TALKS TO ***KEN GOLDMAN*** ABOUT HIS PAST . . . AND FUTURE.

One day son, all this will be yours . . . Sir Alf Ramsey gives Terry Venables the benefit of his experience.

WS: *Taking over the England team, when you were an outsider at the time of Graham Taylor's departure, is a remarkable achievement. Was it always your ambition?*

TV: It was, but then curiously it went away for a time. If I had still been at Tottenham I might not have seen the England job as the thing to do. I did not go back to Spurs, where I had been a player, for money, but for security. I hoped to be there for 15 or 20 years, shaping the club as I wanted things to go. I was hoping to take Spurs back up among the very top clubs, competing for trophies for years to come. I feel we were on line for that when I left. Then of course the England vacancy arose and I changed tack. I wanted to do it because I had not coached an international team before. I certainly hope to do it well.

WS: *Of all the things that you have done in football, what has brought you the most enjoyment?*

TV: Most people say that playing is the best part of your life but I would not necessarily agree with that. It depends what is in your mind and what you love doing. I enjoyed my football career but I did not miss it after I turned to coaching, which is what I always wanted to do. I am fortunate to have covered the whole spectrum, from playing to coaching to management to being a director, coupled with involvement with the PFA, the Managers Union, and the Premier League Committee, and now England. I have seen the whole football thing from many sides but I have to say that coaching players is what I have enjoyed the most.

WS: *Do you think you have failed or succeeded in all these different football ventures?*

TV: I look on my career as a footballer as a successful one. I would not say I was the best player in the world but I was certainly a good First Division footballer. People have said I did not win much as a manager in the First Division, but they forget that I worked in the First Division for only one full season before going to Barcelona. You can only win in the division you take part and I think that I won or qualified for something every year that I was in England before leaving for Spain. There was promotion for Crystal Palace from the Third through to the First Division, and QPR got to the FA Cup Final as a Second Division team. We won the Second Division title and came fourth in my only year in the First Division, and qualified for Europe. At Barcelona we won the League in my first season and were second in the next two, as well as winning one Cup there and reaching the Champions Cup Final. When I returned to Spurs it was more of a rebuilding programme and when I left we were making real progress.

I could do that . . . a young, fresh-faced Terry Venables contemplates a career in journalism.

WS: *Did it have to be Spurs?*

TV: No, but I had always been a Spurs supporter from when I was a youngster. When I was returning

from Spain I was thinking about owning a smaller club but then when the opportunity arose to go back to Spurs I thought there was no reason not to try it at the top. I proved to myself that I could do that, whether or not it is questioned by other people. In the end, of course, the Tottenham issue was a bitter disappointment.

WS: *Would you have gone to Arsenal?*

TV: Yes. But there is no point in regretting things. I am always curious and if it were to be possible to have had a peek round the curtain to see what would have happened if I had gone there.

WS: *That leads to the question about the friendly rivalry between Spurs and Arsenal, as well as between you and George Graham.*

TV: We both hold a distinction of having succeeded in winning the FA Cup as players and managers with the same clubs, and some people foolishly say that because you are friends you do not mind losing to the other or do not want to upset the other when you win. If you deal with your friends or are playing a match against them, you want to beat them even more, because it becomes personal. George and myself have a very healthy rivalry and we would do a lot for each other but when it came to matches I wanted to beat Arsenal and he wanted to beat us. That is the true professional way it should be.

WS: *Was the Barcelona title your greatest achievement?*

TV: In all probability it was, but I have had a lot of happy times. A game in the lower divisions brought my greatest satisfaction. At Crystal Palace we had to go to Wrexham and win by two clear goals to gain promotion instead of them. We did it, and although it was not my greatest achievement it was perhaps the greatest memory. They pulled back from two down to 2-2 with about eight minutes to go and I made a substitution late on in the game. With virtually the last kick of the match the substitute, Rachid Harkouk, scored to make it 4-2, and we were up.

WS: *A lot of coaches and players have followed you from club to club. What is the thinking behind that?*

TV: A lot of managers do that but not for any reason other than knowing what you are going to get. For example Gary Lineker will score goals and Terry Fenwick will organise well and get going when things get tough. It takes a lot of the risk out of buying. Although you may like the look of different players there may be other sides to them that won't do you any good. It is common sense to have people you can rely on and have something to offer. You do not have to teach new tricks and then wait for the results to happen. The work with them has already been done, and that is vital to any manager.

Forever England . . . Terry Venables coaching the Under-21 side back in November, 1979.

Hola Barca . . . Venables greets the fans at Nou Camp.

WS: *Have you deliberately courted the media? You seem to have a good relationship with them.*

TV: I understand the media, which has helped, and I know the kind of job they have to do. Even if you feel they are unfair you have to realise that will not change, so you have to adopt an attitude which says "My job will be done by me and then I will deal with the media and they must then do what they feel is right". I have always liked the company of journalists because if I hadn't been a football person I might have liked to have been a journalist. The majority want accuracy, while some will simply want to be on your side and others want to be your enemy. Their motivation can come from anywhere.

WS: *You have probably managed Paul Gascoigne better than anyone else. What is the secret?*

TV: You have Gazza for better or worse. You know what he is. He will do unbelievably brilliant things, then something as diabolical as the tackle he made in the 1991 FA Cup Final. He is whole-hearted and gives more than he takes and if you are talking about someone of that brilliance you are not going to get a nice, quiet, shy boy reading a book in a corner. He is worth all the trouble you have to take because he gives warmth and friendship and a whole lot more.

WS: *Who are and were your influences?*

TV: Tommy Docherty to start with, Bill Nicholson, Malcolm Allison and Dave Sexton. They made me think, with their interesting ideas. They are great characters who were good for the game and I hate the fact they are not now involved as much as they should be. They should have a place in the coaching scheme of things and their experience should not be frittered away. We should be drawing on their years of wisdom and experience and it is a tragedy if we do not do so.

BRAZIL

SCANDAL!

President accused of 'fixing' referees

THE PRESIDENT of the Rio de Janeiro Football Federation, at the centre of a match-fixing scandal, was asked his opinion of public opinion.

"I hate the people," he replied. "You can machine gun the lot of them. I'm from the elite."

President Eduardo Viana had just been told that 54 per cent of fans interviwed by pollsters thought that he doing a terrible job, compared wth a mere seven per cent who said he was doing a good one.

But despite public outrage, do not be surprised if the scandal is swept under the carpet with neither FIFA nor the CBF showing interest in a full investigation.

The scandal broke when three referees confirmed what many have long suspected, and described a plot to fix results in the 1994 Rio championship.

They claimed that referees had been told they would be responsible for ensuring that chosen games ended in a result compatible with "the interests of the Federation."

The three, who chose to remain anonymous and made the accusations to a Brazilian newspaper, named Wagner Canazaro, president of the Rio Federation's refereeing committee, as responsible for giving the orders.

According to the referees, a federation official nicknamed "Little Robert" would tell referees if their match was one in which the Federation were interested.

'You can machine gun the lot of them. I'm from the elite'

They were then warned: "There mustn't be any upsets, the result must always be the one which interests the Federation."

They did not say which clubs would benefit from the fixing, but Botafogo president Carlos Montenegro told *WORLD SOCCER*: "Certainly, one of the clubs would be Americano."

Americano, a small club from the city of Campos, are well known for being Viana's pet.

Viana was in the US when the scam was leaked. Desperate to dodge reporters on his arrival in Rio he slipped and fell over, denied there was any corruption in his Federation and was then ushered away.

The allegations brought another Viana classic: "Nobody can be arrested before the crime has been committed." In other words, nothing could be done until the fixed matches had been played.

Unfortunately for Viana a former referee then said that dozens of matches already had been rigged since Viana became president in 1985.

This former referee, Reginaldo Mathias, added: "There's an old saying that the CBF use three cars. One is for Viana, one is for Viana's dogs, and one is for the referees of Americano matches."

Mathias, a former president of the Rio Referees Association, also claimed that Viana had used a group of corrupt officials, known as the "riot brigade", to make sure Americano always got a good deal.

Other officials made similar declarations, claiming that the Vasco da Gama and Bangu clubs had been favoured, as well as Americano.

It was the final straw for three of Rio's four major clubs, Botafogo, Fluminense and Flamengo, who announced they were forming a breakaway league.

BRIAN HOMEWOOD

Commentary

Keir Radnedge

MANCHESTER: SO MUCH TO ANSWER FOR

AS AN event, the draw for the qualifying round of the 1996 European Championship was, to be frank, an embarrassment.

The choice of Manchester proved appropriate, with a sort of ill-timed fortune, as a memorial to the efforts of the late Sir Matt Busby in dragging English football, against its will, into the international age.

But the staging of the draw was a shambles. First, the venue — the Granada Studio Tours theatre — was not big enough to contain all the paraphernalia plus all the people, both administrative and media, from around Europe.

Thus an overflow area was provided with a video screen relay of the draw which appeared to be projected by an amateur video enthusiast who arrived halfway through. Not a happy harbinger for the necessary standards of efficiency.

Then, the necessary paperwork for officials and media was hopelessly inadequate and handed out in a chaotic scrum afterwards when it should have been available at least a day in advance. Not that much of it was particularly helpful — especially since, in the confusion, the various language versions were mixed up.

The overspill media interview area was a darkened barn which hosts the "outdoor" scenery for a *Sherlock Holmes* series. That was absolutely no use for the mobile television crews who need bright light in which to work. I hesitate to say absolutely no thought had gone into the event. But either no coherent advice had been sought or, if it had been sought, it had been totally ignored.

As one harassed English reporter croaked through the crush: "Do you think we can persuade the Germans to take this thing back again?"

Now, I know that the general football public is not overmuch interested in how media organisation is handled. But it's like this: the efficiency, or lack of it, of media arrangements generally reflects the overall state of things. Looks like trouble at t'mill.

Tales of men's shirts

UEFA are ready to make one significant concession to the big clubs still suspicious of next season's new, expanded Champions League. One of the major gripes thus far has been the refusal of UEFA to allow competing clubs to wear shirt advertising because of the conflict with the promotional interests of the overall event sponsors (this season Philips, Carlsberg, Nike, Snickers and Ford).

Several clubs were threatened with legal action by shirt sponsors whose investment was geared towards all the promotional possibilities presented by top-level European competition. Next season, therefore, shirt advertising will be OK in the qualifying, group, quarter and semi-final ties though the traditional Final ban will remain. All shirt advertising will have to be cleared with UEFA before competition starts and presumably some delicate negotiation may be necessary where clubs are sponsored by rivals of the event sponsors or by TV channels who do not hold Champions League TV rights.

Meanwhile, as the 1993-94 Champions League awakes from the winter break, consider one disturbing anomaly concerning transfers.

Most countries prohibit transfers during the season. But that does not prevent the unofficial conclusion of transfer deals in mid-term. Now, I suppose it is fair enough for Moscow Spartak to agree the summer departures of Victor Onopko and Vladimir Bestchastnikh to Werder Bremen: they are, after all, in separate Champions League groups.

But what shadows will hang over them should they meet in the semi-finals at the end of April?

Of even more concern are reports from Istanbul that Galatasaray will sell midfielder Tugay, at the season's end, to direct rivals Monaco. The worst thing is, I don't see what anyone can do about it.

SHOWING THE FLAGS

THE SILK STUDIO, of Martock in Somerset, is producing a series of limited editions of World Cup silk ties. The one which arrived at *WORLD SOCCER* is decorated with the flags of all the 24 competing nations.

The "certificate of authenticity" claims that it will be "the topic of conversation in the boardroom or the clubroom." If you have the nerve to wear it!

ONE MAN, ONE JOB

WHEN Barcelona's Romario, interviewed by a Brazilian TV station, said he hoped to see Edmundo of Palmeiras as his attacking partner at US '94, there was hell to pay back home.

Romario was instantly slapped down by managerial aide Mario Zagalo who said: "Romario should mind his own business. Players should concentrate on what they do best, which is playing football."

I have yet to hear Zagalo's reaction to the comment by one Brazilian fan, namely FIFA president Joao Havelange, that . . . Edmundo should play in the World Cup. Remembering Havelange's personally damaging role in the "Pele Affair" in Las Vegas, what should Zagalo say — that FIFA presidents should concentrate on what they do best, which is, um . . . ?

WHO PAYS?

YOU PAY!

A PARLIAMENTARY report which attacked a critical waste of taxpayers' money by the civil service might equally well have been applied to the football industry.

For instance, Graeme Souness (right) quit as Liverpool manager, acknowledging his failure to carry through the allotted task of rebuilding the team while maintaining the expected success rate . . . and collected a reported £400,000 settlement on the remaining two years of his contract.

For instance, Graham Taylor quit as England manager, acknowledging his failure to have steered England to the World Cup finals . . . and collected a reported £70,000 on the remaining six months of his contract. John Toshack is reported to be on £70,000 as part-time manager of Wales — which is more than the luckless Terry Yorath was offered to carry on with the job full-time.

Yet Toshack openly admits that when the club v country crunch comes — as it most assuredly will — then Wales's needs will take second place to those of Real Sociedad (and Spanish Cup ties, of course, are two-leg affairs, played exclusively in midweek).

Who provides all this throw-away largesse, these lucrative rewards for failure or split priorities? Liverpool FC? The Football Association? The FA of Wales? Of course not. It's you, the fan at the gate, who foots the bill.

You do so either directly at the turnstile or indirectly through buying the products which finance the TV coverage (either via *ITV* advertisers or the *BBC's* licence). There's an intriguing theme for the Football Supporters' Association to consider.

HELLO, NEIGHBOUR

ISRAEL coach Shlomo Sharf (above) had little to say about European Championship rivals Azerbaijan. He knew nothing about them. But hardly had he got home than he discovered that Azeri skipper Shayn Denayer lives just 10 minutes from his home.

Denayer plays for Hapoel Taybe, struggling near the bottom of the Israeli Second Division. He is one of three Azeri soccer exiles: the other two are Vili Kasumov, who plays for the Real Betis nursery club in the Spanish Third Division, and Nazim Sulimanov, who plays in the Russian championship for Spartak Vladikavkaz.

Denayev says: "Last year I was playing in Georgia. Vladikavkaz offered me a contract but I had the chance of a trial with Maccabi Netanya and I thought I'd prefer Israel to Russia. The trial didn't work out but Taybe came along so I stayed."

Denayev is hopeful that the Azeris can stage their home matches in the capital, Baku, and will not be forced to play on neutral territory because of "war zone" fears.

He says: "There is fighting, but it's 200 miles from Baku. You might hear the odd explosion now and again but it's close enough to worry about."

Azerbaijan have played eight internationals as an independent republic, says Denayev, who has been captain in six of them, the last a 1-0 win over Georgia in Genja, the Azeris' "second city".

In May last year they played a four-team tournament in Tehran, drawing 1-1 with Kazakhstan, beating Turkmenistan 2-0 and Kirghizstan 3-2. That qualified them for a meeting with their Iranian hosts in the final — but they didn't stay.

Denayev says: "The hotel was so awful we couldn't stand it any longer. I think they beat Turkmenistan 2-1 in the final instead."

Sharf has asked Denayev to let him know when the Azeris will be playing any friendly matches. Denayev told him: "I'll do better than that — I'll even pick you up and give you a lift to the airport."

Harry the gent

HARRY MILLER is best remembered for his years as *The Daily Mirror's* chief football writer. At the time of his death at Christmas, aged 56, he had been deputy sports editor of *The Mail on Sunday* for four years.

He was equally respected both sides of the media/football fence. Put him down anywhere in the football world, from Middlesbrough to Mar del Plata, and you could rely on Harry to come up with The Story. As both colleague and competitor he was a true Gentleman of the Press.

Busby legacy

SIR MATT BUSBY may well be seen, in due time, as the most influential personality in English football in the second half of this century.

He created the Manchester United ethos and worldwide reputation and he had the vision to lead English football, screaming, into Europe. Without his defiance in the face of the insular opposition of the FA and Football League to the Champions Cup, would England have raised the World Cup less than a decade later?

Indeed, would England even have staged the event, never mind won it?

DON'T BE CUSSED

THE publishing industry is not famous as an expletive-deleted environment. So what a load of hypocritical, holier- than-thou twaddle washed around the *Channel 4* documentary: *Graham Taylor - An Impossible Job*.

Was Taylor's language (above) any less industrial than that to be found from factory floor to the White House? Doesn't mean we like it, frozen in time by the cameras and sound equipment, a year condensed into an hour and tipped out in the armchair comfort of our homes.

But then, if you didn't like it, you could always switch off or switch over.

BY PADDY AGNEW

CRACKING UP?

Milan seem to be feeling the pace

HAVE the mighty finally begun to crack? That question must have passed through the minds of Milan's Italian and European rivals following their 2-1 aggregate defeat by Parma in the European Super Cup Final.

Curiously, that was the third time in the last 10 months that Milan have lost a major final. Last May, Marseille defeated them in the Champions Cup, and in December they lost the World Club Cup in Tokyo to Sao Paulo.

After the second leg of the Super Cup Final, when Parma defeated the champions 2-0 in their own San Siro backyard, Milan coach Fabio Capello sportingly acknowledged that Parma were the better side on the night.

President Silvio Berlusconi, currently pre-occupied with running the General Election campaign of his own brand new centre-right party, "Forza Italia" (Go On Italy), pointed to two telling absences - those of injured Dutch striker Marco Van Basten and, more controversially, that of Montenegrin midfielder Dejan Savicevic, dropped by Capello.

As always, the month of March will prove decisive for Milan. In recent years, the dual commitment of vital Italian League and Champions Cup ties has severely penalised the champions.

Last year, however, so great was the Milan lead by the end of January (11 points), that they could afford a poor end of season run, winning only one game (against Ancona) between March 7 and June 6. This time they have a much less substantial lead as they face a cruel springtime against Lazio, Foggia, Juventus, Sampdoria, Inter, Napoli and Parma in seven consecutive games up to April 2, in a period of fortnightly Champions League ties.

Two further factors may yet have a negative influence on Milan's progress.

Firstly, Sampdoria are not involved in European competition and might make the most of a less crowded schedule in which their only possible distraction is the two-leg Italian Cup Final.

Secondly, it remains to be seen what sort of negative impact the involvement of club president Berlusconi in politics may have. Despite Berlusconi's reassurances to the contrary, a resounding electoral defeat on March 27 and 28 may have serious consequences for his allegedly debt-ridden Fininvest empire, and ultimately for Milan.

While Milan worry about their president's electoral fate, the "Old Lady" of Italian soccer, Juventus, have had to worry about a European-wide recession in the car industry.

Juventus, of course, are owned by FIAT, Italy's automobile giant.

After a disastrous 1993 in which FIAT lost $1.8billion, largely due to a 20.4 per cent decline in new car sales in Italy, the company are engaged on a restructuring plan, with 15,000 car workers being laid off this spring.

In such a climate, it becomes difficult to justify the huge running costs.

Gascoigne . . . back to something like his best.

1993 EUROPEAN SUPER CUP

1st leg = Jan 12 — Ennio Tardini Stadium (Parma)
PARMA 0
MILAN 1 (Papin 43)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,083. **Ref:** Diaz Vega (Spa).
Parma: Ballotta — Balleri, Benarrivo (Di Chiara 75), Minotti, Apolloni, Sensini, Brolin, Pin, Crippa, Zola, Asprilla.
Milan: Rossi — Tassotti, Maldini, Albertini (Massaro 67), Caostacurta, Baresi, Eranio, Desailly, Papin, Savicevic (Panucci 85), Donadoni.

2nd leg = Feb 2 — San Siro (Milan)
MILAN 0
PARMA 2 (Sensini 67, Crippa 95)
HT: 0-0. **90min:** 0-1. **Att:** 24,000.
Ref: Rothlisberger (Swi).
Parma won 2-1 on aggregate, after extra time
Milan: Rossi — Panucci, Maldini, Albertini (Lentini 64), Costacurta, Baresi, B. Laudrup (Carbone 76), Desailly, Papin, Donadoni, Massaro.
Parma: Ballotta — Benarrivo, Di Chiara, Minotti, Matrecano, Sensini, Brolin, Pin, Crippa, Zola (Zoratto 104), Asprilla.

BY NICK BIDWELL

SPOTLIGHT ON
DEMETRIO ALBERTINI

Christian brothers

One in church, one on the pitch

FOOTBALL and Catholicism are often said to be the basic ingredients of Italian life. This analysis certainly applies to the family of Milan's Demetrio Albertini.

While Demetrio continues to shine in midfield for Milan, his elder brother Alessio has opted for a career as a priest.

"Both Alessio and myself have been very lucky in life up to now," says Demetrio. "He has fulfilled his dream to work for the church. I am a footballer with one of the best clubs in the world. We come from a close family and are very proud of the other's achievements.

"Success has come my way relatively early. I am only 22 and I have already helped Milan win two championships and represented my country. Sometimes I cannot believe all that has happened."

Milan have the luxury of a 25-man squad crammed with superstars, yet over the past two years Albertini seems to have experienced few problems in carving a

Shining in midfield . . . Milan's Demetrio Albertini.

Since 1990, the club have spent $135million putting together a side with only two UEFA Cup trophies to show for their efforts.

Last season the club returned an annual loss of $6.7million, while the current wage bill in Turin is $17.6million.

The late January appointment of former Juventus glory boy, Roberto Bettega, to succeed Giampiero Boniperti as club "president" (the job has another title, but the meaning is president) was interpreted by many as heralding major changes and cost reductions.

Apart from a brief period in 1990-91, Boniperti has run the Juventus ship for the last 23 years.

Vialli . . . struggling with injuries.

His departure may be followed by that of injured striker Gianluca Vialli, on a $4.4million per annum contract, German attacker Andreas Moller ($1.6 million) and Brazilian defender Julio Cesar ($1.4 million), all due to be replaced by less expensive names.

Even the legendary Juventus coach, Giovanni Trapattoni, who has been with Boniperti for 14 of those 23 years, may well be replaced by a younger (and less expensive) man.

Only European Player of the Year Roberto Baggio ($3.5million) looks safe.

In the meantime, Trapattoni's side continue to play well and a winning run in the UEFA Cup cannot be excluded by way of a typical Trapattoni swan song.

Further signs of socio-economic turbulence in Italian soccer came in the same week that Juventus appointed Bettega, when Napoli directors confirmed that the club were close to bankruptcy following their inability to attract much wanted sponsorship from the Dutch bank, ING.

Napoli, currently playing moderately well in mid-table, allegedly have $51.7million worth of debts.

Corrado Ferlaino, Napoli president almost without interruption from 1969 to last year, remains the club's major shareholder with 53 per cent, but, not surprisingly, he is unwilling to give away his stake gratis to any would-be rescuer. Until that particular knight in shining armour rides over the Vesuvius hill, however, the Feder-ation and League may attract short-term sponsorship worth $20million.

This stop-gap solution would both ensure that the players get the two months of backpay they are owed, while at the same time allow breathing space for a potential buyer to emerge.

Were these not times of relative recession in Italy, Napoli would find a buyer tomorrow.

The fact, too, that a certain D.A. Maradona no longer plays there does not help, in terms of either image or box-office.

The Napoli story may yet run and run.

As indeed does the Italian chapter in the life and times of Lazio's Englishman, Paul Gascoigne.

He was threatened with an abrupt termination of his contract in June unless he produced something like his best form.

Now he has shaken off a troublesome series of injuries and settled into what looks like being an extended first-team run.

What is more, the more often he plays, the better he looks.

Gascoigne for Italy, next season, too.

RESULTS

SERIE A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	21	12	8	1	23	8	32
Juventus	21	10	8	3	35	19	28
Sampdoria	21	12	4	5	38	26	28
Parma	21	11	5	5	32	15	27
Internazionale	21	9	7	5	32	21	25
Lazio	21	9	7	5	28	23	25
Napoli	21	8	7	6	32	24	23
Torino	21	8	7	6	27	21	23
Foggia	21	5	10	6	30	26	20
Roma	21	5	10	6	18	20	20
Cagliari	21	6	8	7	28	34	20
Piacenza	21	6	7	8	19	29	19
Cremonese	21	6	6	9	24	28	18
Udinese	21	4	9	8	15	24	17
Reggiana	21	5	6	10	16	26	16
Genoa	21	4	8	9	14	27	16
Atalanta	21	4	7	10	21	37	15
Lecce	21	1	5	16	15	39	6

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

WEEKEND

ITALIAN CUP — 3RD ROUND, 2ND LEG

PIACENZA 1 (Piovanni 46)
MILAN 0. **Att:** 9,341.
Piacenza won 2-1 on agg

TORINO 0
ATALANTA 0. **Att:** 3,902.
Torino won 3-0 on agg

AVELLINO 2 (Fresta 16, De Marco 36)
ANCONA 2 (De Angelis 33, Agostini 80 pen). **Att:** 5,000.
Ancona won 3-2 on agg

VENEZIA 0
FIORENTINA 0. **Att:** 11,667.
Venezia won 2-1 on agg

BRESCIA 2 (Leada 88, Ambrosetti 93)
PARMA 3 (Melli 25, 52, Asprilla 90). **Att:** 5,722.
Parma won 4-3 on agg

FOGGIA 2 (Stroppa 64, Roy 107)
CESENA 0. **Att:** 7,621.
Foggia won 3-1 on agg

INTER 2 (Fontolan 7, Bergkamp 74 pen)
UDINESE 1 (Gelsi 40). **Att:** 4,343.
Inter won 2-1 on agg

AS ROMA 2 (Cappioli 6, 51)
SAMPDORIA 1 (Platt 39).
Agg 3-3, Samp won 5-4 on pens

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

WEEKEND

REGGIANA 0
MILAN 1 (Desailly 27). **Att:** 14,600.

UDINESE 0
JUVENTUS 3 (Marocchi 19, Pellegrini 48 og, R. Baggio 61). **Att:** 28,000.

LAZIO 1 (Signori 38 pen)
SAMPDORIA 1 (Gullit 6). **Att:** 45,000.

PIACENZA 1 (Ferrante 21)
PARMA 1 (Balleri 39). **Att:** 16,000.

INTER 1 (Bergkamp 82 pen)
ATALANTA 2 (Magoni 18, Orlandini 87). **Att:** 40,000.

NAPOLI 1 (Bia 0)
FOGGIA 1 (Roy 26). **Att:** 65,000.

TORINO 1 (B. Carbone 65)
ROMA 1 (Giannini 57 pen). **Att:** 20,000.

GENOA 1 (Galante 11)
CREMONESE 0. **Att:** 33,000.

CAGLIARI 2 (Oliveira 16, Dely Valdes 86)
LECCE 1 (Padalino 25). **Att:** 15,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

MIDWEEK

ITALIAN CUP — QUARTER FINALS, 1ST LEG

FOGGIA 0
PARMA 3 (Brolin 12, Zola 52, Asprilla 72). **Att:** 17,370.

VENEZIA 0
ANCONA 0. **Att:** 10,000.

PIACENZA 2 (Frazzoli 53, Piovani 58)
TORINO 2 (Annoni 22, Ventura 47). **Att:** 7,251.

SAMPDORIA 1 (Lombardo (33)
INTER 0. **Att:** 15,643.

WEEKEND

MILAN 0
LECCE 0. **Att:** 50,000.

SAMPDORIA 4 (Lombardo 34, Gullit 52, R. Mancini 86, 91)
NAPOLI 1 (Fonseca 50). **Att:** 27,000.

CREMONESE 1 (Giandebiaggi 43)
JUVENTUS 1 (R. Baggio 25). **Att:** 18,000.

UDINESE 1 (Bertotto 32)
PARMA 0. **Att:** 32,000.

FOGGIA 4 (Di Biagio 18, Cappellini 37, 92, Mandelli 83)
LAZIO 1 (Boksic 50). **Att:** 20,000.

TORINO 1 (Chiti 50 og)
PIACENZA 0. **Att:** 20,000.

REGGIANA 1 (Sienza 66)
INTER 0. **Att:** 14,000.

AS ROMA 1 (Cappioli 61)
GENOA 1 (Skuhravy 39). **Att:** 45,000.

CAGLIARI 1 (Oliveira 86)
ATALANTA 1 (Orlandini 74). **Att:** 20,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

WEEKEND

GENOA 0
MILAN 0. **Att:** 40,000.

JUVENTUS 0
ROMA 0. **Att:** 40,000.

PIACENZA 2 (Piovani 30, Ferrante 61)
SAMPDORIA 1 (Lombardo 83 pen). **Att:** 18,000.

LECCE 1 (K. Ayew 31)
PARMA 1 (Minotti 50). **Att:** 9,000.

LAZIO 2 (Di Matteo 46, Cravero 50 pen)
REGGIANA 0. **Att:** 40,000.

INTER 3 (Sosa 18, Jonk 31, Bergkamp 88)
FOGGIA 1 (Di Biagio 85). **Att:** 50,000.

NAPOLI 2 (Fonseca 4, 12 pen)
CREMONESE 1 (Gualco 79). **Att:** 50,000.

ATALANTA 2 (Codispoti 45, Rambaudi 54)
TORINO 2 (Silenzi 41, P. Pogi 72). **Att:** 25,000.

UDINESE 1 (Branca 32)
CAGLIARI 1 (Dely Valdes 61). **Att:** 15,000.

niche for himself in the big time. "It is not too difficult to settle into a side when you are surrounded by top-quality players like Franco Baresi, Paolo Maldini and Roberto Donadoni, plus all the great foreigners," he explains.

"Because there are so many talented midfielders at Milan, I have to prove myself in each and every game. There is no other way.

"The competition for places here is fierce and first team spots have to be earned with commitment and concentration.

"You can never take anything for granted in football. I know that only too well. I played in many of Italy's World Cup ties and then missed the Scotland game through injury. I recovered in time for our match with Portugal, but I was only a substitute.

"It's not a problem though. I respect coach Arrigo Sacchi's decision and now it is up to me to establish myself again. I would hate to miss the World Cup finals.

"Although we have been criticised quite a lot lately, Italy must be among the contenders for the title."

Courtesy of his crisp distribution, powerful shooting and prodigious energy, Albertini has emerged as a worthy successor to Carlo Ancelotti in the centre of Milan's midfield.

"Albertini had a hard act to follow," declares the ex-Milan golden boy of the 60s and 70s, Gianni Rivera.

"Ancelotti was one of the most intelligent players I have ever seen and was the team's number one tactician.

"At the start of the 1991-92 season, Albertini had just returned to Milan from a year on loan with Padova and I was not sure he was ready for the demands of Serie A. But he was put in the first team and never looked out of place.

"With a minimum of fuss, he proved he was a young player of immense class and maturity. He is one of the best in Europe in his position."

Nowadays, Demetrio has to shoulder even more responsibility. The summer departure of Frank Rijkaard to Ajax and a long-term injury to Zvonimir Boban created a substantial hole in the Milan midfield, and coach Fabio Capello can be thankful for Albertini's growing authority and goals.

Indeed, his marksmanship has come to his side's rescue on more than one occasion this season. Not content with a late, headed equaliser in the 1-1 home draw against Juventus, a month later he curled home a last-minute free-kick to give Milan a 2-1 victory over Napoli.

"My goal in the Napoli game was most satisfying," says Albertini. "We cannot afford to drop points at home and to hit the winner with only seconds remaining was very exciting.

"I also scored from a free-kick in a victory against Roma earlier this term. I hope my luck at set-pieces continues.

"Fabio Capello is always telling me that I must improve my finishing. He has set me a target of eight goals. I can do it."

Demetrio Albertini was born in the Lombardy village of Besana on August 23, 1971. After graduating from Milan's youth ranks, he made his Serie A debut in his club's 4-0 win over Como in 1989.

Unfortunately, he was not to remain in the first team, and in the autumn of 1990 he was loaned to Padova. "I really enjoyed my spell there," he recalls. "We had an excellent side and my team-mates included the former international striker Beppe Galderisi, winger Angelo Di Livio and full-back Antonio Benarrivo.

"It was one of the biggest disappointments of my career when Padova just missed out on promotion to Serie A."

There was no time for regrets. Within a few days he was recalled to Milan and during the next 12 months he won his first cap for Italy, in a European Championship tie versus Cyprus in December 1991, helped his club claim the championship and starred as the Italian Under-21 side took the 1992 European Championship.

"Whether for club or country, it is always a great feeling to win trophies," says Albertini.

"I want more success and as long as I work hard and listen to the advice of my coaches, there is no reason why I should fail."

BY GRAHAM TURNER

Valencia called to account

NOT many dull moments in Spain these days. Recent weeks have produced new heroes, new villains, sackings, punches, bankruptcy and fraud.

There's also been a bit of football, with Barcelona's historic rout of Real Madrid in the Nou Camp a significant landmark. It was their first 5-0 against their arch-enemies since Johan Cruyff's first season, two decades ago, and the first at home since 1945, 12 years before Nou Camp was built.

The aftermath was more important than the result, and psychological damage may take a long time to heal. Real's fans received painful confirmation of the footballing poverty of Benito Floro's side and elimination from the Spanish Cup by Atletico Madrid five days later would have provoked seismic reactions. But, having drawn 2-2 in the Bernabeu stadium, they crossed the capital and won 3-2 in the Manzanares to earn a breathing space, with Fernando Hierro ending a spell of not talking to Floro by producing a colossal performance in midfield.

Ramon Mendoza had previously called a press conference for the following morning and, despite popular forecasts that he would wipe the floor with Floro and announce his resignation as president, he opted for a "Crisis? What crisis?" approach and claimed his only priority was to renegotiate the £17.5million loan which the Banesto business had put on hold at exactly the wrong moment.

Bills totalling £1.4million, which should have been paid last Autumn, are still outstanding.

Valencia have supported Real in their campaign to make the accounts department more newsworthy than the team, with club secretary — now ex-club secretary — Vicente Pons making a brave attempt to honour his surname.

According to pre-established protocol, Valencia were to present the Football League with a bill for their share of TV fees with a view to being paid some £900,000. When they did so, they were a wee bit shocked to be informed that the League had already received an identical bill from a finance company called Factorcat.

They had, it transpired, as the Factorcat was eased out of the bag, advanced some £700,000 to Pons on the basis of a document stating that Valencia had signed over their TV rights to a company called Derwald where Pons is a director.

Valencia knew nothing of this and it didn't take much Perry Masonry to put poor Pons in a pretty pickle.The Derwald document featured a forged rubber stamp from the Football League (apart from being rectangular instead of round it was a good forgery) and forged signatures of the club's former president, Arturo Tuzon, and one of his directors.

Before the Fraud Squad could appear and ask "Hola, hola, what's goin' on 'ere?", Pons pussy-footed back to Factorcat and agreed to repay the dodgy dosh. The extent of forgery charges he will have to face is still open to speculation.

This was the penultimate straw for Valencia's waning fortunes and tarnished image. They had, in the meantime, dropped into the mid-table pack where they were joined by another of the ante-post favourites, Atletico Madrid. Coach Emilio Cruz walked out after the 2-1 defeat in the Madrid derby against Rayo Vallecano, ignoring Jesus Gil's uncharacteristic bid to retain him. No immediate appointment has been made because, as Gil puts it, "so many trains have passed through this station that there aren't many left to catch."

The stop-gap solution was Jose Luis Romero, a former assistant to Udo Lattek at Barcelona. He had been named technical secretary at Atletico, which didn't prevent *FIFA News* from carrying an advert he had placed in the hope of obtaining work overseas. Having reluctantly agreed to don his tracksuit on an interim basis, he is afraid of burning himself out in the hot seat and needing to re-insert his ad.

The only silver lining faintly detectable in the Manzanares was not a million miles from Serge Maguy's newly-assigned locker in the dressing-room. The Ivory Coast skipper had been impressive enough during his trial period to warrant a two-year contract with an option for a third.

There have been no silver linings for Real's striker Alfonso. After hitting exhilarating form, he trod on the ball during the epic 5-0 in Barcelona and tore cruciate ligaments. No more football this season and no World Cup.

Romario, the hat-trick hero of Barca's triumph, also earned a four-game rest during the following week's 0-0 draw in Seville. Going on as 64th-minute sub, he had been on the pitch for 14 minutes when, running through the centre-circle, he was accidently-on-purpose stamped on by Sevilla's Argentinian midfielder Diego Simeone.

The move ended in a free kick for Barca on the left and Romrio shaped for a near-post run. But, having narrowed his eyes and straightened his lips, he sprinted forward to floor Simeone with a left hook, followed by the traditional "What, me ref?" when shown the red card.

Barcelona president Josep Lluis Nunez insisted that Romario should be let off and Simeone punished for provocation. Sevilla's boss, Luis Aragones, suggested Simeone be banned for assaulting Romario's fist with his chin. The four-match suspension — the minimum penalty — was considered so lenient that Barcelona dropped their intended appeal.

RESULTS

PRIMERA DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
La Coruna	19	12	5	2	27	6	29
Barcelona	19	11	4	4	38	18	26
Sporting Gijon	19	11	2	6	30	21	24
Real Madrid	19	10	3	6	29	24	23
Athletic Bilbao	19	7	7	5	26	18	22
Sevilla	19	7	7	5	26	18	21
Albacete	19	5	10	4	27	25	20
Racing Santander	19	7	6	6	24	25	20
Real Sociedad	19	7	6	6	24	25	20
Oviedo	19	6	7	6	21	24	19
Valencia	19	7	5	7	21	25	19
Atletico Madrid	19	5	8	6	29	25	18
Real Zaragoza	19	7	4	8	30	27	18
Tenerife	19	7	3	9	23	31	17
Rayo Vallecano	19	7	3	9	26	35	17
Logrones	19	4	7	8	25	31	15
Celta Vigo	19	4	6	9	15	24	14
Valladolid	19	4	6	9	14	26	14
Osasuna	19	5	3	11	17	33	13
Lleida	19	3	5	11	10	24	11

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

WEEKEND

RAYO VALLECANO 0
LA CORUNA 0. Att: 10,000.

SPORTING GIJON 2 (Abelardo 34, Miner 75)
BARCELONA 0. Att: 24,000.

REAL MADRID 2 (Butragueno 51, Santi 55 og)
ALBACETE 0. Att: 80,000.

SEVILLA 1 (Suker 23)
REAL SOCIEDAD 0. Att: 30,000.

ATHLETIC BILBAO 1 (Ciganda 5)
RACING SANTANDER 2 (Pineda 78, Radchenko 88). Att: 40,000.

VALENCIA 0
OSASUNA 0. Att: 40,000.

TENERIFE 1 (Solozabal 13 og)
ATLETICO MADRID 1 (Pirri 91). Att: 18,000.

CELTA VIGO 1 (Gudelj 8)
REAL ZARAGOZA 0. Att: 16,000.

LLEIDA 1 (Rubio 72 pen)
OVIEDO 1 (Carlos 8). Att: 7,000.

LOGRONES 0
VALLADOLID 0. Att: 9,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

MIDWEEK

SPANISH CUP — 5TH ROUND, 1ST LEG

TENERIFE 3 (Chano 20, 41, Latorre 90)
VALENCIA 1 (Mijatovic 40).

BADAJOZ 1 (Altimira 36)
REAL ZARAGOZA 0.

REAL BETIS 3 (Cullar 24, Olias 66, Aquinho 83)
MERIDA 1 (Jose Maria 55).

REAL MADRID 2 (Zamorano 10, Michel 82 pen)
ATLETICO MADRID 2 (Caminero 34, 54).

SPORTING GIJON 0
BARCELONA 3 (Amor 3, Sergi 9, Salinas 27).

ESPANOL 0
SEVILLA 1 (Simeone 65).

LA CORUNA 1 (Donato 24)
OVIEDO 3 (Armando 24, Jokanovic 26, Rivas 42).

LOGRONES 1 (Paco 45)
CELTA VIGO 0.

WEEKEND

LA CORUNA 3 (Claudio 42, 43, Donato 47)
LOGRONES 0. Att: 18,000.

BARCELONA 5 (Romario 24, 57, 81, Koeman 49, Ivan 87)
REAL MADRID 0. Att: 100,000.

ATHLETIC BILBAO 0
REAL SOCIEDAD 0. Att: 40,000.

REAL ZARAGOZA 3 (Aragon 34 pen, Belsue 62, Gay 66)
SPORTING GIJON 0. Att: 15,000.

ALBACETE 2 (Alejandro 43, Nilson 61)
SEVILLA 2 (Simeone 7, Suker 21 pen). Att: 11,000.

RACING SANTANDER 1 (Quique Setien 5)
TENERIFE 0. Att: 16,000.

VALLADOLID 1 (Alberto 63)
VALENCIA 1 (Pizzi 18). Att: 9,000.

ATLETICO MADRID 0
LLEIDA 0. Att: 30,000.

OVIEDO 5 (Andrades 29, Carlos 57, 59, 88, Maqueda 90)
VALLECANO 0. Att: 19,000.

CELTA VIGO 1 (Berges 63)
OSASUNA 0. Att: 14,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

MIDWEEK

SPANISH CUP — 5TH ROUND, 2ND LEG

BARCELONA 1 (Salinas 5)
SPORTING GIJON 1 (Ablanedo 14).
Barcelona won 4-1 on agg

SEVILLA 2 (Suker 26 pen, Simeone 47)
ESPANOL 2 (Francisco 15, Fonseca 83).
Sevilla won 3-2 on agg

REAL OVIEDO 0
LA CORUNA 1 (Riesco 41).
Real Oviedo won 3-2 on agg

CELTA VIGO 1 (Gudelj 7)
LOGRONES 0.
Celta won 5-4 on pens

VALENCIA 3 (Galvez 3, 85, Penev 44)
TENERIFE 2 (Chano 60, 89).
Tenerife won 5-4 on agg

REAL ZARAGOZA 3 (Aragon 14 pen, Belsue 34, Pardeza 88)
BADAJOZ 0.
Real Zaragoza won 3-1 on agg

ATLETICO MADRID 2 (Juanito 42, Pedro 78 pen)
REAL MADRID 3 (Butragueno 40, Luis Enrique 46, Lasa 62).
Real Madrid won 5-4 on agg

MERIDA 1 (Salguero 75)
REAL BETIS 1 (Aquino 62).
Real Betis won 4-2 on agg

WEEKEND

LA CORUNA 3 (Mauro Silva 53, Bebeto 76, Claudio 86)
VALENCIA 1 (Galverz 52). Att: 52,000.

SEVILLA 0
BARCELONA 0. Att: 45,000.

SPORTING GIJON 7 (Escaich 6,44, 58, 64, Abelardo 11, Stanic 37, 39)
OSASUNA 1 (Martin Gonzalez 66). Att: 14,000.

REAL MADRID 3 (Butragueno 11, Michel 79 pen, 85 pen)
REAL ZARAGOZA 2 (Higuera 10, 91).
Att: 70,000.

TENERIFE 2 (Castillo 31, Chano 86)
ATHLETIC BILBAO 1 (Guerero 85).
Att: 18,000.

REAL SOCIEDAD 1 (Kodro 30)
ALBACETE 1 (Nilson 82). Att: 12,000.

LLEIDA 0
RACING SANTANDER 0. Att: 8,000.

LOGRONES 2 (Juanma 60, Lewandoski 83)
OVIEDO 2 (Maqueda 18, Jokanovic 31).
Att: 9,000.

RAYO VALLECANO 2 (Visjnic 210, Onesimo 40)
ATLETICO MADRID 1 (Kosecki 49).
Att: 12,000.

VALLADOLID 2 (Alberto 10, Inaqui 83)
CELTA VIGO 1 (Andrijasevic 55).
Att: 18,000.

BY ARTHUR ROTMIL

VOGTS LOOKS ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

THE German media largely dismissed Germany's American tour as an irrelevance.

The world champions lost to Argentina 2-1, beat the US 3-0 and drew 0-0 with Mexico, but as a leading commentator put it, using a time-honoured German expression — "apart from expenses, there was nothing in it".

National team manager Berti Vogts offered a more positive view saying: "Our team demonstrated, despite the stressful trip and the attendant unpleasant problems, that it has become a closely-knit unit. That is why, in my opinion, this expedition was highly valuable. It is on tours like these that the feeling of togetherness is fostered."

What Vogts meant by the "unpleasant problems" was the first media boycott by the players since he took command. Captain Lothar Matthaus gave only a brief explanation: "The campaign against us which has been running for months, in some sections of the press, is the reason for this protest action."

The 22 squad members refused to give any interviews temporarily, much to the disgust of Vogts who knew nothing about it and then tried in vain to persuade them to change their attitude.

The performance of the players in the three matches certainly gave rise to criticism. Even Vogts could not hide the fact that his charges will have to raise their game to succeed in the World Cup. But he observed: "Our results in 1993 were impressive. We've lost only once in 11 games while in three matches at home against tough opposition we scored 13 goals."

Asked about who the outstanding players were, he replied: "At national level, in the Bundesliga, Lothar Matthaus was my player of the year. Internationally it is Andy Moller."

Vogts also explained the dilemma over the position of the libero: "Olaf Thon's injury forced a reshuffle. I decided on Matthaus, but this led to further changes in midfield. In the forthcoming matches against Italy and England we shall continue to experiment."

Matthaus (right) was the 25th libero the Germans have fielded since Franz Beckenbauer left the national squad in 1977. And the vastly improved Matthias Sammer became the 26th when asked to perform in that role against Mexico, alternating with Matthaus when the latter moved into attack. In the absence of the injured striker Karlheinz Riedle, the Bundesliga's top scorer Stefan Kuntz (Kaiserslautern) made his debut and scored against the US.

Lothar 'no comment' Matthaus.

BUNDESLIGA ROUND UP

On the domestic front the league clubs allowed their players a few weeks off at the start of the winter break, but then all reported for training in the first week in January.

The big story was the turmoil at Bayern Munich which culminated in team manager Erich Ribbeck's departure. Losing the title race last season after leading for 32 out of 34 matches was bad enough. Getting knocked out in the UEFA Cup by Norwich City and in the DFB (German) Cup by Dynamo Dresden was more serious.

The continual tactical and personnel changes confused the galaxy of expensive stars and when the Dutch international Jan Wouters was sold to PSV Eindhoven without Ribbeck's knowledge it became clear that his position was untenable. Officially he resigned, but insiders claim that he was "gently" pushed.

Vice-president Franz Beckenbauer took over as boss for four months — apparently Monaco's successful coach Arsene Wenger is lined up to become Bayern's team chief next season. Goalkeeper Oliver Kahn, voted by journalists as Germany's best, is leaving Karlsruher SC for Bayern in the summer and the highly-talented Under-21 striker Karsten Baron, 20, has been signed from Hamburg SV.

Meanwhile, controversial referee Karl-Josef Assenmacher, who was vilified by England fans and their media for failing to send off Holland's Ronald Koeman in the World Cup qualifying tie which sealed England's elimination, has claimed: "I was never suspended by FIFA. I was taken off the Belgium v RCS World Cup tie because of English hooligans threatening to follow me to Belgium.

"I have not been selected for the World Cup finals because, at 46, I have passed the FIFA age limit for referees. That is also why I will finish my career in Germany at the end of this season."

Champions Werder Bremen have brought in the two brilliant Russian forwards Vladimir Bestchastnik and Viktor Onopko from Moscow Spartak. But they are losing their top scorer, the Swiss-New Zealander Wynton Rufer, who wants to try his luck in the new Japanese J.League, while the super libero Rune Bratseth is returning home to Norway.

The first half of the Bundesliga season ended on November 20. Subsequently three further rounds were played on November 27, December 4 and 11, before the winter break had started.

BUNDESLIGA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayer Leverkusen	20	9	7	4	40	27	25
Eintracht Frankfurt	20	10	5	5	35	24	25
Bayern Munich	20	8	8	4	42	23	24
Kaiserslautern	20	10	4	6	39	26	24
Werder Bremen	20	8	7	5	30	23	23
Hamburg	20	10	3	7	34	29	23
Duisburg	20	8	7	5	26	29	23
Borussia Mg	20	8	5	7	41	38	21
Karlsruhe	20	6	8	6	27	22	20
Bor. Dortmund	20	7	6	7	29	31	20
Dyn. Dresden	20	6	8	6	21	29	20
Freiburg	20	7	5	8	36	36	19
Koln	20	8	3	9	24	28	19
Stuttgart	20	5	8	7	26	31	18
Nurnberg	20	6	3	11	24	33	15
Wattenscheid	20	3	8	9	26	38	14
Schalke	20	4	6	10	20	34	14
Leipzig	20	2	9	9	16	35	13

BY ANDRE DUCLOS

Michel has last laugh

"I'M GOING to the World Cup, you're not," Henri Michel might be tempted to jeer at Eric Cantona.

Michel (above), publicly abused by Cantona (right) when he was manager of France, an indulgence which put Cantona's international career into sharp reverse, has suddenly been called up to manage the Cameroon team in the US.

It seems the habit among third world countries who qualify for the finals to make a sudden change in management. Michel certainly has the experience and he should find it a little easier to converse with his players than did their Russian manager in 1990.

Cantona, honourably placed in the European Footballer of the Year rankings, was typically honest when asked about the ups and downs of Manchester United, their surprising elimination from the Champions Cup by the Turks and all.

"Go back to 1991," he said, "when United beat Barcelona in the final of the Cup-winners Cup. In 1992 we lost in the same way that Barcelona lost the previous season against Moscow. A trap of a match. You lead easily and you relax. You get too proud."

Happy with his third place in the European poll? "Yes," he says, "but next time I've got to be first." Which won't be easy after France's World Cup elimination. Honours tend to go to one who has excelled in the World Cup.

Cantona calls Peter Schmeichel "the best goalkeeper in the world." And Ryan Giggs, United's Welsh prodigy? "If all goes well and given the protection he has here, I don't see how it could go badly; he will, at 27 years old, be a phenomenon. He's a great worker and beside that, he creates."

Cantona still stands by his remark that had France qualified for the World Cup finals, he would have won the European poll.

"I was serious. In eight qualifying games, I scored five times. None of those who finished ahead of me did as much. I don't think I am being pretentious in stating that. Since I've played in the Champions Cup, I've scored in each round, against every team."

And what of the appointment, surprising and perhaps only temporary, of Aime Jacquet as the new manager of the French international team?

"I've known him since Montpellier. In any case, look at Houllier. The Saturday before the Bulgarian match, he was the king. Afterwards, he was walking dead. You can appoint anyone you like to run the national team. If he wins, he's good, if he loses, he is nothing."

Cantona doesn't think there is a valid comparison between the elimination of France from the World Cup and that of England.

CANTONA

'If France had qualified for the World Cup I would have won the European Footballer of the Year poll . . . I don't think I am being pretentious in stating that . . . none of those who finished ahead of me did as much'

"No, because in 1990 the English were semi-finalists in Italy, eliminated on penalty kicks by Germany. We have proved nothing. If you take our generation, or that of Platini, we won more than the English. We lost much fewer, but we lost the ones that were decisive. We must be missing something."

And now, Jacquet. It cannot be easy for him to take over at a time when everyone seems to be wondering just how long he will last and speculating that the powers that be are simply waiting until the end of the season when a club manager such as Arsene Wenger of Monaco or Luis Fernandez, once a star of the French midfield, might be free.

"All managers are intermediate," says Jacquet, boldly, "and I am well placed to know it. Sometimes it can all depend on 15 seconds."

Just Fontaine, still record holder with his 13 World Cup goals in 1958, says bluntly: "Jacquet is a Houllier mark two. He is part of the scene. It was quite logical that they took him for a transitional period. They couldn't do otherwise. For two matches they are not going to take a revolutionary like Fernandez. All those who have personality, a strong character and ideas about the game — none will be taken."

Jacquet, an ex-manager of Saint Etienne and Bordeaux, exonerates his predecessor from all blame.

Critics of Jacquet's appointment recall that when he was manager of Bordeaux, with such fine creative players as Tigana and Giresse to call on, his tactics were dour and cautious. He has been described as "a pioneer of cold realism," which would hardly endear him to the likes of Cantona and Jean-Pierre Papin. We shall see.

As for Fernandez, the last thing his club, Cannes, would want would be to lose him to the national team. Fernandez has been doing great things on the coast. "A real leader of men," the Cannes club secretary, Gilbert Chamonal, calls him.

"Free yourself and enjoy yourself" has been the watchword of Fernandez since he took over a club in trouble at the turn of 1992.

Since then Cannes have won a place in the top division.

Cantona . . . Pretentious? Moi?

RESULTS

DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paris SG	23	15	6	2	32	12	36
Marseille	23	13	6	4	33	19	32
Bordeaux	23	12	5	6	30	20	29
Auxerre	23	11	5	7	33	18	27
Nantes	23	8	10	5	26	17	26
Montpellier	23	9	8	6	26	22	26
Strasbourg	23	7	11	5	27	23	25
Monaco	23	8	8	7	34	25	24
Cannes	23	8	8	7	26	28	24
Lyon	23	9	5	9	22	25	23
St Etienne	23	6	10	7	21	19	22
Sochaux	23	6	10	7	23	23	22
Lens	23	5	11	7	19	20	21
Metz	23	6	8	9	20	23	20
Caen	23	8	3	12	18	33	19
Lille	23	4	10	9	21	31	18
Le Havre	23	3	12	8	15	25	18
Martigues	23	4	10	9	23	35	18
Angers	23	3	9	11	21	34	15
Toulouse	23	3	9	11	15	33	15

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

WEEKEND

PARIS SG 1 (Guerin 11)
MARSEILLE 1 (Voller 14). **Att:** 48,000.

NANTES 4 (Loko 24, Ouedec 55, N'Doram 72, J-M. Ferri 75)
BORDEAUX 1 (Croci 89). **Att:** 23,000.

AUXERRE 2 (Cocard 32, 78)
METZ 0. **Att:** 8,000.

MONACO 1 (Klinsmann 88)
MONTPELLIER 2 (Asanovic 63 pen, Lefevre 76). **Att:** 2,500.

CANNES 1 (Durix 66)
STRASBOURG 1 (Bouafia 50). **Att:** 6,000.

LYON 1 (Delamontagne 30)
SOCHAUX 0. **Att:** 12,000.

TOULOUSE 1 (Loret 68)
ST ETIENNE 2 (G. Passi 4, Camara 73). **Att:** 7,481.

LENS 2 (Wallemme 20, Slater 60)
CAEN 0. **Att:** 14,119.

LE HAVRE 1 (Moreau 65)
LILLE 0. **Att:** 7,098.

MARTIGUES 0
ANGERS 0. **Att:** 2,500.

INSIDE OUT

COMPILED BY
DAVID PROLE AND
JOHN KELLY

The writing's on the wall

UNUSUAL graffiti seen on a wall in Hawera, a town in the south-west of New Zealand's North Island: METALLIST KHARKOV!
How, we wonder, did a gesture of support for a Ukranian team come to be emblazoned on concrete in Taranaki province, a rugby stronghold (aren't they all?) and NZ's equivalent of South Devon?
If you've seen any more unusual soccer graffiti in odd places do let us know and we'll print the best entries.

Confident Kiwis

STILL in New Zealand . . . a sign on a soccer ground in an Auckland suburb: Mount Wellington: an unbeatable football club!
That's one we wouldn't have chosen for ourselves.

Patel United

WE'RE indebted to *The Guardian* Saturday diary, easily the best oddity-collecting service in the business, for the following:
"The widespread publicity before an annual five-a-side tournament played in Leicester was not matched by the scrawny post-tournament coverage.
"This may have been because it would have been impossible to understand any of the match reports: all 240 players taking part were called Patel."

Praise be!

THE HEAD of Romania's Orthodox Church, Patriarch Teoctist, presented Steaua Bucharest's Illie Dumitrescu with a rare edition of the Bible when the midfielder turned 25 in January. Dumitrescu, an international midfielder, said Teoctist congratulated Romania's national team for reaching the World Cup finals in the US this summer.
"The head of the Romanian Church has solid knowledge of soccer and he told Romanian players he is one of their most fervent fans," Dumitrescu said.

BLUE BLUES

BIRMINGHAM have achieved few records for a team in such a densely-populated city. One is that they have reached double figures in goals in five games, more than any other League club.
Now they are in line for another - one they don't want. They have used 38 players so far this season, and seem well on course to pass the record of 42 set by Hull City back in the first postwar season, 1946-47.

Kaizer poser

BAYERN MUNICH coach Franz Beckenbauer seems to have solved one of the most tricky problems facing him at the Bundesliga club . . . which car to drive and which tracksuit to wear. Germany's 1990 World Cup-winning coach has been put in an embarrassing position since he took over at Bayern in January. The club's main sponsor is carmaker Opel while Beckenbauer has a lucrative private contract with rival Japanese firm Mitsubishi.
But an Opel spokesman said he would not force him to go along with the club's contract.
Beckenbauer wore a tracksuit with no advertising at his opening training session and his Mitsubishi car stood out among the posse of Opels in the club car park.

Dedicated followers of fashion

VALENTINO, Italy's renowned fashion stylist, will design the kits and full dress for Italian players for the World Cup in the US. A general agreement, details of which were not disclosed, was signed by the Italian Federation and officials of Valentino's fashion house.
Italian players, known as the Azzurri, will wear the traditional blue shirts in World Cup matches.

EMERGENCY 999

NIGEL RANSOM was sent off in mid-January for the first time in his career — in his 999th game for GM Vauxhall Conference club Welling. The 34-year-old defender was dismissed after only 20 minutes of a Kent Senior Cup tie against Gravesend.

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HOLLAND . . . . . .

Being Frank – and succeeding

TWO about turns in Dutch football — Frank Arnesen (PSV Eindhoven) and Johnny Metgod (Feyenoord) have made up with their clubs.

Arnesen is now "technical manager" in charge of all organisation within PSV. Metgod has played his last game for the club to concentrate on the organisation and coaching of the youngsters.

Arnesen, 37-year-old ex-Danish international midfielder, PSV player and assistant coach, complained in public last year about what he believed to be "poor organisation" within the club. He was asked to leave.

The new PSV chairman Bill Maeyer read reports that Arnesen had agreed terms with Willem II Tilburg to become their assistant coach and decided there and then that Arnesen was the man to reorganise PSV. This means that Kees Ploegsma remains general manager and secretary, but has no further control over the football matters of the club.

It does not affect chief coach Aad de Mos. He remains in charge of the first team. Arnesen does the rest — with the help of assistant coaches of course!

Almost a junior . . . Johnny Metgod.

PSV simply have experienced too many internal problems, on the football front that is, and are determined to re-establish themselves as a top European club.

Arnesen says: "I may be the first Danish manager with a big club, but I know the club well. After all I have been a player here, a person in charge of teams, a coach for the little kids and assistant coach for the professionals.

"I'm here to do a job and I have much to learn. Whatever my title is I must learn from Aad de Mos. He is with the first team in the right place. It is up to me to help him.

"I have learned much as an assistant coach, now I wait for the future. I'm still a youngster, but the future holds everything for everybody."

Johnny Metgod is also a relative football junior. At 35 he has played his last game for Feyenoord to become the man in charge of building up the Feyenoord youngsters from the age of eight to 18. Yet during the last close season chief coach Wim Van Hanegem declared that Metgod was no longer his captain and there was no guarantee of a first-team spot for him.

Metgod got himself in trouble with Terry Venables once, when he criticised the then Spurs manager for not giving him a regular place in the first team at White Hart Lane.

At Feyenoord, he also said what he thought — in public — and it was thought that was the end of a quite brilliant career. Not for Metgod!

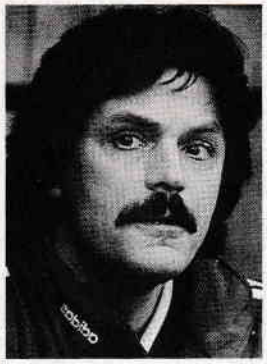
In reality, Feyenoord did not want to replace Wim Jansen as general manager after he left for Saudi Arabia as assistant coach to Leo Beenhakker. They have appointed instead a full-time scout and Metgod.

One of Amsterdam's favourite players is going home at the end of the season. Stefan Pettersson, the 30-year-old Swedish international striker, is leaving Ajax and going home to finish his professional career with his old club IFK Gothenburg.

ERIC NICHOLLS

BELGIUM . . . . . .

Luka's hard-luck story



LUKA PERUZOVIC, fired last year as Anderlecht coach after a half a season in charge, has again been sacked in January — this time by Racing Genk.

Last year Anderlecht were then (just as this season) runaway leaders and Peruzovic (above) was fired only because the very critical Anderlecht president, Constant Vanden Stock, said the team did not play positively enough.

But this time it is very different for the 41-year-old Croat, who became coach of Genk in the beginning of October.

With only seven points out of a possible 40, Genk are rock bottom and the arrival of Peruzovic (who took over from Pierre Janssen) did not change that. Assistant coach Pierre Denier will now be Genk's third coach this season.

Peruzovic was the fifth managerial casualty of 1993-94. Earlier Pierre Janssen (Genk again), Arie Haan (Standard Liege), Henk Houwaart (Cercle Bruges) and Paul Theunis (Waregem) had to go. Two of them have new jobs. The Waregem board found a new position for Theunis and signed Houwaart as coach.

Anderlecht won their first trophy of the new season in January, the Belgium Super Cup. The game was due to be played in August, but was postponed after King Baudouin's death.

Against Standard Liege, Anderlecht proved masters of their own ground (the game was played in their Constant Vanden Stock stadium). In front of only 12,000 people, Luc Nilis scored twice and a John Bosman penalty wrapped it up.

Par Zetterberg became, as expected, Belgium's Player of the Year for 1993.

The Swedish midfield player was influential in the rise of Charleroi in the last part of the 1992-93 season (he played for them on loan). This season he has played very well for Anderlecht, the runaway leaders, despite diabetes.

Zetterberg is only the third foreign player to receive the title. The others were Dutchmen Rob Rensenbrink and Jan Boskamp . . . and the latter is now Zetterberg's coach at Anderlecht.

JAN HERMEN DE BRUIJN

Joint bid for Euro 2000

A DAY before the European Championship draw in Manchester the Football Federations of Belgium and Holland gave a presentation for Euro 2000 in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

If the bid suceeds, it would be the first time that two countries organised the tournament together. Holland and Belgium have high hopes, and UEFA chairman Lennart Johanssen has spoken in favour of the plans on several occasions.

There are only two problems: the competition from other countries (Spain and possibly a joint bid from Austria and Switzerland) and the fact that not all the stadiums in Belgium are big enough (a minimum of 30,000 seats is required).

The Federations plan that Euro 2000 will be held in seven cities; four in Holland and three in Brussels where King Baudouin Stadium, holding 40,000, will take the place of Heysel.

All-seated Brugge and Liege or Charleroi are the other Belgian sites.

In Holland Feyenoord's 54,000 all-seater, Ajax 's ground (50,000 seats; to be completed in June 1996), PSV Eindhoven (30,000 seats) and Vitesse Arnhem (to be built — 30,000) will be used.

LUXEMBOURG . . .

A glimmer of hope

THE draw for the qualifying stages of the European Championship gives Luxembourg a chance of avoiding bottom place.

Holland, Norway, the Czech Republic, Malta and Byelorussia are the opponents, with Paul Phillipp's team hopeful of at least two victories.

Joel Wolff, executive secretary of the Luxembourgeoise Football Federation, said: "We're very satisfied with the draw. There are no real organisational problems with the games, so this should be financially rewarding."

Luxembourg's next game is a friendly at home against Morocco on March 23.

Defending champions Avenir Beggen have regained the lead by beating their main rivals, CS Grevenmacher, 2-1 away. Jeunesse Esch moved into third place with a hard-earned 2-1 victory at Union Luxembourg, who go down to fifth place.

Spora moved off the bottom on goal difference after beating Aris 1-0 at the Stade Municipal.

TIM BRICE

ICELAND . . . . . .

ICELAND'S outstanding manager, Gudjon Thordarson, has taken over at KR Reykjavik.

Thordarson, thought to be the highest-paid manager in the league, has an outstanding record, winning four trophies in only five years with KA Akureyri and IA Akranes, who beat Feyenoord in the Champions Cup last autumn.

KR also have signed IA's international goalkeeper, Kristjan Finnbogason, who played throughout his youth at KR.

Tryggvi Gudmundsson, the IBV's top scorer last season and Salih Porca from Eylkir also have been bought. IA Akranes have lost their Golden Boot award winner of last season, Thordur Gudjonsson (the oldest son of Gudjon at KR) to German club Bochum.

Thordur, who scored 19 goals last season in 18 matches, recently played his first international, at the age of 20.

Valur Reykjavik have signed Gudni Bergsson from Tottenham. He is the captain of the national team, but had little success in England.

Arnor Gudjohnsen (formerly with Anderlecht and Bordeaux) has transferred from Hacken to Orebro in Sweden for a record fee, after being nominated Footballer of the Year.

BJORN HRAFNSSON

DENMARK .....

Two more clubs fold

TWO of the oldest clubs in Denmark have been thrown out of the League after enduring huge financial problems.

Frem, the Copenhagen-based club founded in 1886, were the first to be relegated into non-league football and revert to totally amateur status. And they were soon followed by B1909, from the city of Odense.

Alongside the end of KB and B1903, whose identities were only retained by token clubs in non-league competition when they merged to become FC Copenhagen, it represents another massive blow to soccer traditions.

Frem were champions six times and won the Danish Cup twice. Only last season they had a creditable run in the UEFA Cup, beating Neuchatel Xamax before losing to Real Zaragoza.

They played friendly matches against a series of English clubs in the 1950s to broaden the appeal of soccer in Denmark.

B1909's greatest years were the the 1960s when they regularly drew 20,000 crowds as they twice won the League and Cup. Their demise is a savage blow after they rejected the option a few years ago of merging with great rivals OB Odense to form a team called Odense United.

Both Frem and B1909 only dropped out of the 10-club Superliga a year ago. But it seems the price for going professional and then failing to stay up is both quick and dramatic.

In less than 12 months both clubs folded, and that is not a situation which can be ignored. Indeed, the falls from grace have already re-opened the whole debate about whether the Superliga can really be sustained in a country where average crowds are still around only 4,000 per match.

The prospects for the clubs are grim if the experience of the new B1903 is anything to go by. They have already dropped two rungs further down the pyramid into total obscurity.

For traditionalists, though, there is at least one bright spot on the horizon — the gradual re-emergence of Hvidovre. They were champions as recently as 1981, but then faded into the non-leagues as players, including Peter Schmeichel, left in droves. Now, under the leadership of Tommy Moller Nielsen, brother of Denmark's national team boss Richard, they have fought their way back to the First Division.

The second half of the Superliga season starts again in March and winter leaders Silkeborg have signed the country's top goalscorer, Soren Frederiksen, from relegated Viborg.

JIM HOLDEN

FIXTURES

DENMARK — *second half of season*

Sunday, March 20
Brondby v Silkeborg
Lyngby v FC Copenhagen
AGF Aarhus v Aab Aalborg
Ikast v OB Odense

Sunday, March 27
Silkeborg v Lyngby
OB Odense v Brondby
FC Copenhagen v AGF Aarhus
Aab Aalborg v Ikast

Thurday, March 31
AGF Aarhus v Silkeborg
Lyngby v Brondby
Ikast v FC Copenhagen
Aab Aalborg v OB Odense

Monday, April 4
OB Odense v Lyngby
Brondby v AGF Aarhus
Silkeborg v Ikast
FC Copenhagen v Aab Aalborg

Sunday, April 10
Aab Aalborg v Silkeborg
Ikast v Brondby
AGF Aarhus v Lyngby
FC Copenhagen v OB Odense

Sunday, April 17
OB Odense v AGF Aarhus
Lyngby v Ikast
Brondby v Aab Aalborg
Silkeborg v FC Copenhagen

Sunday, April 24
OB Odense v Silkeborg
FC Copenhagen v Brondby
Aab Aalborg v Lyngby
Ikast v AGF Aarhus

Sunday, May 1
Ikast v Silkeborg
AGF Aarhus v Brondby
Aab Aalborg v FC Copenhagen
Lyngby v OB Odense

Sunday, May 8
Brondby v Lyngby
Silkeborg v AGF Aarhus
FC Copenhagen v Ikast
OB Odense v Aab Aalborg

Sunday, May 15
Lyngby v Silkeborg
Ikast v Aab Aalborg
AGF Aarhus v FC Copenhagen
Brondby v OB Odense

Monday, May 23
Silkeborg v Brondby
FC Copenhagen v Lyngby
Aab Aalborg v AGF Aarhus
OB Odense v Ikast

Sunday, May 29
AGF Aarhus v Ikast
Lyngby v Aab Aalborg
Brondby v FC Copenhagen
Silkeborg v OB Odense

Sunday, June 5
FC Copenhagen v Silkeborg
Aab Aalborg v Brondby
Ikast v Lyngby
AGF Aarhus v OB Odense

Sunday, June 12
Lyngby v AGF Aarhus
Brondby v Ikast
Silkeborg v Aab Aalborg
OB Odense v FC Copenhagen

SWEDEN .....

Rolf back in picture

MALMO provided the shock of the Swedish close season by firing Danish coach Viggo Jensen.

Jensen, the former coach of Denmark's Olympic team, had been with MFF for only one full season and had another year left on his contract. Malmo's indifferent form last year, added to the tightening competition in the Skane area, led to his downfall. He will be replaced by Rolf Zetterlund, 51, one of Sweden's most experienced and respected club coaches. He was Player of the Year in 1980, then spent six years coaching AIK Stockholm. After that he coached Orebro and Sparvagen, the Second Division club who produced Jonas Wirmola, now with Malmo after a spell at Sheffield United.

"It is a challenge to take over at a full-time club like Malmo. We have a lot of promising youngsters and all we need is a little bit more consistency and we can look forward to gaining a place in Europe," says Zetterlund.

Forward Stefan Pettersson, 30, will return to IFK Gothenburg once his contract with Ajax Amsterdam expires next summer. Pettersson, one of Sweden's best exports in recent years, is in his sixth season with Ajax, and played a starring role in their 1992 UEFA Cup win.

To balance their accounts, IFK have sold bustling international midfielder Hakan Mild, who has signed for Servette of Switzerland.

Other Swedes on the move include Trelleborg's top scorer Mats Lillienberg, who has joined German club TSV 1860 Munich, Johnny Ekstrom, now with Real Betis in Spain, and defender Roger Ljung, who has left Admira Wacker for Turkey's Galatasaray.

Betis bound . . . Ekstrom (dark shorts).

FINLAND .....

Mixu's days look numbered

HAS Mixu Paatelainen, of Aberdeen, played his last match for the Finnish national team?

National coach Tommy Lindholm says that Paatelainen's international future is in the balance after the player refused to travel for Finland's final World Cup match in Israel.

"Mixu told me that he has been put under pressure by his club and while I can understand that, I won't accept players who don't make themselves available when they are fit and picked to play," he says.

Lindholm, with an image of a quietly-spoken gentleman, has surprised many with his "get-tough" policy. He has already axed goalkeeper Kari Laukkanen for the same reason — choosing to play for a foreign club instead of his country.

"It is clear that Finnish players don't always get a fair crack of the whip at their foreign clubs," Lindholm admits. "But the rules are clear; we, too, have a job to do and a national team to run. If someone doesn't want to come and play we must turn to those who will."

PENTTI HIETANEN

AUSTRIA .....

Sounds of derision in Mozart's city

AUSTRIA SALZBURG'S greatest triumph induced the biggest turmoil ever in the beautiful city of Mozart.

Following the sensational 3-0 victory over Sporting Lisbon in the UEFA Cup — after a 2-0 defeat away — club president Rudolf Quehenberger promptly announced that the quarter-final tie against Germany's Eintracht Frankfurt will not be staged at home but 180 miles away, in Vienna's Ernst Happel stadium, and would draw 50,000 fans.

Salzburg's ground has been limited by UEFA for security reasons to just 8,500.

But the plan caused consternation. The fans threatened to boycott the match, the players don't want to give up home advantage, while the city councillors are concerned about their image. Salzburg's board of directors are demanding the council should pay them £600,000 compensation if they want the game to go ahead in the city.

Salzburg's Croatian coach Otto Baric was in raptures when he heard the draw. "Super, fantastic, a dream pairing," he said. "I wanted German opposition."

Baric explained that firstly he loves the role of underdog, secondly he wants to end a negative sequence of 17 games between German and Austrian club sides that have all ended in Gemany's favour.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

ISRAEL .....

ISRAEL'S see-saw championship race continues. During the last five weeks, the lead at the top of the National League changed three times between Maccabi Tel Aviv and Maccabi Haifa.

Tel Aviv conceded top position after losing for only the second time this season, 3-2 at home to the champions, Betar Jerusalem.

Haifa then went top, only to surrender the position the following week, by drawing 0-0 at Hapoel Holon, while Maccabi Tel Aviv beat Maccabi Herzliya 2-1.

But since then Haifa have won all their matches and climbed to the top for the second time after Tel Aviv drew 0-0 with Holon.

So, after 20 domestic rounds, Haifa are clinging to a two-point lead over Tel Aviv and are still the only undefeated team in Israel this season.

AVI MELLER

NORWAY . . . . . .

Olsen in need of some net gains

NORWAY'S one-week tour of the United States gave national manager Egil Olsen the chance to try out new players, having left behind some who had made vital contributions in the qualifying matches.

Some were omitted due to lack of form (Sorloth, Fjortoft, Jacobsen, Bjornebye) and others due to injuries (Bratseth, Halle). A couple of the new faces certainly showed they will be in the reckoning when the final squad is selected.

In terms of results the tour certainly wasn't a success. In a 2-1 defeat against the United States and a 0-0 draw against Costa Rica Norway failed to produce any brilliant football, but there were periods of solid team-work. The quality of pitches was very poor though, both in matches and training.

Against the US Frank Strandli (Leeds) gave Norway the lead just before the interval with a well-struck shot, but the US equalised from a corner early in the second half. Norway seemed to be in control for the remainder of the second half but as they piled on the pressure searching for the winning goal, the defence fell asleep a couple of minutes from the end and Cobi Jones was allowed to steal it for the US.

The 2-1 defeat certainly didn't reflect the balance of play, but it shows the problem of goalscoring in the Norwegian team. Geir Frigard made his debut and managed to get into useful positions in front of goal but was unable to put the ball in the net.

Erik Mykland was creative in midfield and seems likely to develop into a very exciting player, always searching for openings and unexpected moves. The match against Costa Rica was totally one-sided but Norway never managed to convert their dominance into goals. Mykland was again brilliant and alongside him in mdfield Lars Bohinen showed why he has been a success with Nottingham Forest.

Frigard got into good positions but closest to scoring was full-back Tom Staurvik, who sent a marvellous shot against a post. Staurvik, normally an attacking midfielder for his club Bodo-Glimt, made a promising debut. Central defender Alf Inge Haaland (Nottingham Forest) also played his first match in the full national side.

The tour confirmed that a Norway side without skipper Rune Bratseth certainly can't compete with the best. His individual qualities and ability to organise and lead by example are so important.

But who are going to score the goals for Norway in the World Cup this summer? Strandli and Frigard were given the chance on the US tour but lack international experience and waste too many chances.

Jan Aage Fjortoft seems to have refound his goalscoring form with Swindon in England lately, but Goran Sorloth still hasn't impressed at Turkish club Bursaspor.

One of the most reliable midfielders, Oivind Leonhardsen, was hurt in training in the US and most probably will miss US '94.

SIGURD ODEGAARD

Heading for America . . . Norway striker Fjortoft.

SWITZERLAND . . .

Sforza's identity crisis

CIRIACO SFORZA, Switzerland's reigning Footballer of the Year and a key member of the national side who qualified for the World Cup finals for the first time in 28 years, has shocked the country with the disclosure that he is renouncing his nationality and has applied to become an Italian citizen.

He knows that this step will effectively end his international career, unless the present regulations are changed. Sforza, orchestrator of Germany's Kaiserslautern, explains: "Switzerland is not a member of the EC. If I wanted to join an Italian or any other foreign club in the future I could have problems."

He is also upset because his live-in girlfriend Nicole has been turned down for a job with a local travel agency. She has a Swiss passport, but as a non-EC national she needs a work permit in Germany. Sforza says: "We Swiss are outsiders politically speaking and this is clearly making life complicated for us. As an Italian citizen these difficulties would not arise for me."

Sforza was born in Switzerland but his parents are Italian so he should find it relatively easy to switch nationalities again. Like his parents he has had a residential permit, but was granted Swiss citizenship only three years ago. Now he will forfeit his eligibility for international football.

He will not only be giving up his place in the swiss national side; as an Italian he could not play for them either because, in accordance with FIFA regulations, he already has represented Switzerland in competitive matches. This recently revised directive is unlikely to be revoked.

Sforza moved to Kaiserslautern after rejecting approaches from Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, VfB Stuttgart, Napoli and Sampdoria. He cost the Germans a club record £1million and unlike most foreign imports made an immediate impact in the Bundesliga.

Kaiserslautern's much travelled and experienced team manager Friedel Rausch enthuses: "Sforza is a gem. Only 23 and already a personality. He is intelligent, technically superb and he never loses his composure.

"His vision, positional play and passing skills are outstanding, his physical engagement and ball-winning ability exceptional. As a playmaker he has the talent to establish himself as a world-class footballer for years to come."

Heading for Italy . . . Sforza has applied for a change of citizenship.

Sforza was born on March 2, 1970 in Wohlen in the Swiss canton of Aargau. His ball skills surfaced early — at 13 he already played in the first team of an amateur club where his father was once the libero. Young Ciriaco, who suffered a broken leg on five occasions, learned the job of a sanitary engineer, but gave up after just three weeks having been persuaded to join Switzerland's premier club, Grasshopper Zurich.

The country's record champions (22 titles) and Cup-winners (17), fell on hard times last year and thus Sforza became the first man chosen as Player of the Year from a club who completed the season in the relegation play-off pool. The votes in this poll were cast only by players and managers from clubs competing in the championship group.

Kaiserslautern suits the Swiss striker in every way. "The town is picturesque, while the fans are unbelievably enthusiastic.The famous Betzenberg ground is nearly always full and the atmosphere is fabulous.

"The footballers here clearly enjoy a status unknown in Switzerland where professional sportsmen are still looked on condescendingly," he claims.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

WorldCup USA94

FOUR weeks before the World Cup draw Switzerland's leading specialist paper *Sport Zurich* published in jest their ideal group for the national team.

Strangely, the opponents they hoped to draw, US, Romania and Colombia, were the teams the Swiss ended up with, causing a wave of jubilation among the soccer fraternity. "We were lucky," said Switzerland's manager, Roy Hodgson. "And even the venues are marvellous from the point of view of climate."

The SFV launched a programme of thorough preparation for the squad which included a training spell of 10 days in the US in January, with matches against the US and Mexico. For April and May further tests are planned and the final phase of preparation will begin on May 25.

Luzern are delighted that "trouble-shooters" Paul Wolfisberg and the German Timo Konietzka helped to save them from dropping into the relegation pool. It is not yet certain whether this duo will continue in office.

Konietzka was originally employed to co-ordinate the youth section, and only wants to carry on looking after the professionals if Wolfisberg stays. But he claims he only wanted to help in an emergency and would rather return to his principal job as an architect.

Luzern's big star is striker Urs Guntensperger 26, who made a remarkable comeback. Two years ago he was badly hurt in a car crash while over the alcohol limit. He was lucky not be confined to a wheelchair for life.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

GREECE .....

Alexis is the new top shot

FOR the past two seasons Vasilis Dimitriadis has led the Greek First Division scorers and lifted AEK Athens to the title.

This season, Dimitriadis is in a scoring slump and has even been left out by coach Dusan Bayevic.

But that has not stopped AEK from finding a new scoring leader and continuing their winning ways.

Alexis Alexandris, a Greek national team midfielder, is doing all the scoring — 16 times so far. His latest goal came in the big derby when AEK, at home, beat Panathinaikos 2-0 to take a comfortable nine-point lead. This was the sixth match in a row that Alexandris had scored.

'I wish all the players on the team had as many opportunities to score goals as I do," he said. "My main concern is for the team to finish first again.

Alexandris, who made his professional debut at the age of 18 in the Second Division for Veria, is now 24, has been with AEK for three seasons, and has played for the national team seven times but has yet to score.

Olympiakos are showing signs of bouncing back, after a 2-0 victory at home against Athinaikos. That put them third, within two points of Panathinaikos.

LOU ECONOMOPOLOUS

MALTA .....

Hibernians enjoying life with Brian

BRIAN TALBOT seems to have given a breath of fresh air to his side. Hibernians, the newly-crowned Maltese winter champions.

The 17-year-old goalkeeper Mario Muscat and English striker George Lawrence (above right) are two main reasons why Hibs are steadily positioned at the top of the table after the first round.

Talbot's full confidence in the young keeper has been rewarded while Lawrence, who has worn the jerseys of Southampton, Millwall and Bournemouth, has added more punch to the attack.

Lawrence struck again to head in the only goal of the game against championship rivals Valletta, then continued his fine form with another solo goal in the 5-2 pounding of St Andrew's.

Champions Floriana are still hot on their heels. In his farewell game, homesick Irish striker Brian Crawley scored the only goal as the champions struggled to beat St Andrew's 1-0. A penalty save by Cluett rescued the day for Floriana.

The "greens" brought over 34-year-old former Manchester City and Coventry striker Dave Bennett to fill in the void left by Crawley.

Bennett soon made a confident impact on the Floriana supporters by scoring on his debut, as Floriana beat struggling Rabat Ajax 3-0 to go second — just one point adrift of the leaders.

Hamrun Spartans, third on 14 points, beat Mqabba 2-0 and Birkirkara 1-0 to keep within striking distance of the top two.

Valletta regained lost ground in beating Mqabba 2-0 and opened their second-round account with a similar victory over St Andrew's.

Valletta were involved in a squad reshuffle after the bitter disappointment of losing to Hibs. Czech keeper Taborsky was bought to fill in for injury-prone international Cini but after only one game Taborsky was involved in a part-exchange deal which brought to Valletta the former Bulgarian national keeper Slobodan Janus, with Taborsky going to Mqabba.

Valletta went down 1-0 to Hibernians on Janus's debut. Young central defender Darren Debono arrived from Sliema to make up for the surprising departure of Brazilian defender Osnir Populin, who joined Birkirkara.

DOMENICO AQUILINA

PORTUGAL .....

New regime at Benfica

IF YOU love your football roots, not only if the team win championships and Cups, if you are interested in the future, if you want to actually belong to your club and not be a shouting machine for something owned by some men of industry, you should take notice of what has happened in Lisbon.

Benfica, the Lisbon Eagles, had gone through a bad spell. There was a financial hole, players and other employees were not being paid, the directors could not agree among themselves and two of the first-team "stars" were lured by Sporting LIsbon.

The whole of Portugal could not believe what was going on. The country did not want to know any more about matters like inflation, local elections, the personality of the Prime Minister. What really mattered was the future of Benfica, a great national and world club.

The directors, obviously, could not govern the club anymore. Under pressure by the "socios" (fee-paying members) they had to resign, and an election was called.

You would suppose that under the tremendous financial crisis the club was living through, nobody would want to take the mantle of the presidency.

Astonishingly, many people declared themselves ready to fight for the leadership and two main candidates emerged — Manuel Damasio, owner of a large chain of businesses, and Jose Capristano, a long-standing supporter and former director.

You could not expect the 80,000 "socios" to go out and vote, but 13,645 did, and 87 per cent cast their papers in favour of Damasio, against 13 per cent for Capristano.

In the end, in an atmosphere of indescribable passion, the new president said: "Benfica deserves everything. Everything!"

The new president and the other directors, 18 in all, later went to the stadium for the official takeover. Thousands went to see the great moment when a new era, perhaps, would be unveiled.

Damasio is the 30th president in 90 years. He has now entered the Hall of Fame of those who have made and led Benfica to fame and greatness.

He will be seated in the chair where such as Bogalho, the foreign-exchange dealer who, with the supporters' help, had the Stadium of Light built, and De Brito, who contracted Bella Guttmann as manager so that the European Champions of 1961 and 1962 could bring undying glory to Benfica.

By saying "Benfica is ours, we shall decide who will run it for us," the "socios" proclaimed loudly and clearly that they intend to go on owning the club and deciding what is best.

And the team, playing wonderful football again, are first in the table, three points clear of Sporting Lisbon and six ahead of FC Porto, who have appointed Bobby Robson as coach following Tomislav Ivic's move to FIFA, where he joins their coaching staff.

ALBERTO DA SILVA

TURKEY .....

Turning to Germany

AFTER years when Yugoslav coaches were prevalent, Turkish football now prefers Germans.

The first German seeds were sown in 1984 by Jupp Derwall when he became the manager of Galatasaray, then Sepp Piontek took charge of Turkey.

Last season's surprise team Kocaelispor brought in another German manager, Reinhard Saftig, whose 18-month contract costs the club £280,000. Kocaelispor's former trainer, Guvenc Kurtar, refused to work with Saftig as an assistant and became the manager of Sariyer.

Germans are still popular with Galatasaray. Last season Rainer Hollmann took charge of the team from Kalli Feldkamp, winning the championship and subsequently reaching the Champions League this season. This success initiated Fenerbahce, and they signed Holger Osieck.

The English trend ended at Besiktas after Gordon Milne left the club. Christoph Daum took over there.

Fenerbahce won the Bielefeld five-a-side tournament, beating Bielefeld 5-2 on penalties in the final.

HASAN CEMALI

TABLES

ENGLAND — DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Crystal Palace	27	16	4	7	48	32	52
Charlton Ath	27	14	6	7	35	25	48
Millwall	27	13	8	6	37	28	47
Leicester City	27	13	7	7	47	32	46
Tranmere Rov	27	13	6	9	39	33	45
Nottm Forest	26	12	8	6	41	30	44
Derby County	27	13	3	11	43	41	42
Wolves	27	10	12	5	41	27	42
Stoke City	27	12	6	9	37	39	42
Southend Utd	28	12	4	12	44	39	40
Bolton Wand	28	10	9	9	36	32	39
Bristol City	28	10	78	10	30	33	38
Portsmouth	27	9	10	8	31	34	37
Sunderland	27	11	4	12	29	34	37
Notts County	27	11	3	13	38	47	36
Middlesbrough	27	8	10	8	34	28	34
Luton Town	26	9	5	12	32	34	32
Watford	28	8	7	13	42	54	31
Grimsby Town	27	6	13	8	33	32	31
Birmingham City	28	7	7	14	29	43	28
West Brom	28	6	9	13	39	45	27
Oxford Utd	28	6	8	14	32	50	26
Barnsley	27	6	7	14	31	45	25
Peterborough	26	5	8	13	24	34	23

KONICA LEAGUE OF WALES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter Cardiff	20	16	1	3	50	25	49
Ton Pentre	19	13	4	2	40	14	43
Bangor	21	13	3	5	46	19	41
Cwmbran T	21	11	3	7	30	24	36
Ebbe Vale	19	11	2	6	36	30	35
Aberystwyth	19	10	4	5	31	23	34
Holywell	19	10	3	6	44	32	33
Porthmadog	23	9	5	9	52	38	32
Newtown	20	10	2	8	28	30	32
Conwy	21	9	4	8	37	37	31
Flint Town	18	8	4	6	33	27	28
Connah's Quay	20	7	6	7	29	26	27
Caersws	20	5	7	8	23	30	22
Maesteg Park	21	5	4	12	29	42	19
Llansantffraid	23	5	4	14	24	42	19
Mold	21	5	3	13	34	54	18
Haverfordwest	20	5	3	12	24	48	18
Afan Lido	19	4	5	10	29	41	17
Briton Ferry	19	3	5	11	30	45	14
Llanelli	17	4	2	11	26	48	14

NORTHERN IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portadown	19	14	4	1	52	12	46
Linfield	18	14	2	2	43	14	44
Glenavon	18	14	1	3	45	19	43
Crusaders	18	13	2	3	38	16	41
Cliftonville	18	8	5	5	30	19	29
Coleraine	19	8	5	6	29	29	29
Distillery	18	8	4	6	30	25	28
Bangor	18	9	1	8	31	33	28
Glentoran	18	6	4	8	27	25	22
Omagh	19	5	3	11	24	41	18
Ards	18	5	2	11	37	43	17
Ballyclare	18	4	3	11	23	44	15
Ballymena	18	4	3	11	23	44	15
Carrick	18	3	5	10	28	48	14
Larne	18	3	4	11	22	39	13
Newry	17	1	4	12	9	40	7

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shamrock Rov	24	15	3	6	45	22	48
Cork	23	12	6	5	45	26	42
Galway	24	11	7	6	38	29	40
Shelbourne	23	10	7	6	33	27	37
Bohemians	24	9	7	8	26	20	34
Derry	24	9	7	8	24	25	34

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dundalk	24	8	9	7	27	20	33
Monaghan	24	9	5	10	28	28	32
St Patrick's	23	6	10	7	24	24	28
Cobh Ramblers	24	5	6	13	21	35	21
Limerick	23	4	8	11	16	40	20
Drogheda	24	4	5	15	16	47	17

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	19	16	2	1	54	11	34
Feyenoord	19	13	5	1	40	14	31
Vitesse	20	13	2	5	46	18	28
PSV	21	10	8	3	37	19	28
Roda JC	18	10	3	5	29	20	23
NAC	20	10	3	7	40	29	23
Willem II	20	9	4	7	34	23	22
FC Twente	20	8	5	7	26	22	21
VVV	21	6	8	7	21	33	20
Sparta	20	6	7	7	29	30	19
GA Eagles	20	8	3	9	30	33	19
MVV	20	6	6	8	27	36	18
Heerenveen	21	6	6	9	19	39	18
Utrecht	20	6	4	10	24	42	16
Groningen	20	4	4	12	23	47	12
Volendam	20	4	3	13	25	42	11
RKC	19	1	6	12	18	39	8
Cambuur	20	1	5	14	14	39	7

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	22	16	4	2	55	23	36
Club Brugge	22	13	8	1	34	15	34
Seraing	22	11	8	3	36	17	30
Charleroi	22	13	3	6	45	30	29
Antwerp	22	10	8	4	32	24	28
Standard	22	9	6	7	27	16	24
Mechelen	22	6	12	4	27	21	24
Oostende	22	6	11	5	31	30	23
Lommel	22	7	8	7	27	28	22
Ekeren	22	7	6	9	29	30	20
Gent	22	5	10	7	31	35	20
Beveren	22	5	9	8	25	28	19
Liege	22	5	8	9	25	39	18
Lierse	22	3	11	8	20	29	17
Cercle Bruges	22	5	7	10	33	46	17
RWDM	22	3	5	14	20	44	11
Waregem	22	3	5	14	20	44	11
Genk	22	1	6	15	23	54	8

HUNGARY .....

That's confidence for you!

HUNGARY have a 75 per cent chance of being in England for the 1996 European Championship, according to part-time national team manager Jozsef Verebes, whose one-year contract expires in the summer.

After the draw, in the same group as Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland and Turkey, Verebes said with typical bravado: "We are getting better and better and we will prove it. We have talented players in Zoltan Vegh, Auriel Csertoi and Istvan Pisont, and I am confident."

Vegh, the goalkeeper, and Csertoi play at Raba ETO, where Verebes has a contract as manager until June 30, 1995. These two players, plus clubmates Csaba Bordas, Asttila Kuttor and Laszlo Klaus, have played only a few internationals.

Alarm will increase if Verebes has his contract renewed and continues to snub foreign-based players.

Hungary could beat only one nation in their World Cup qualifying group — Luxembourg. They lost twice to Iceland, who will again be difficult opponents, and there can be no guarantee of the Hungarians beating any team in the group.

Lajos Baroti, who managed he national team more times than anyone else, and Rudolf Illovszky, in charge for two spells, plus former player, Tibor Nyilasi, think Hungary's chances are 50-50.

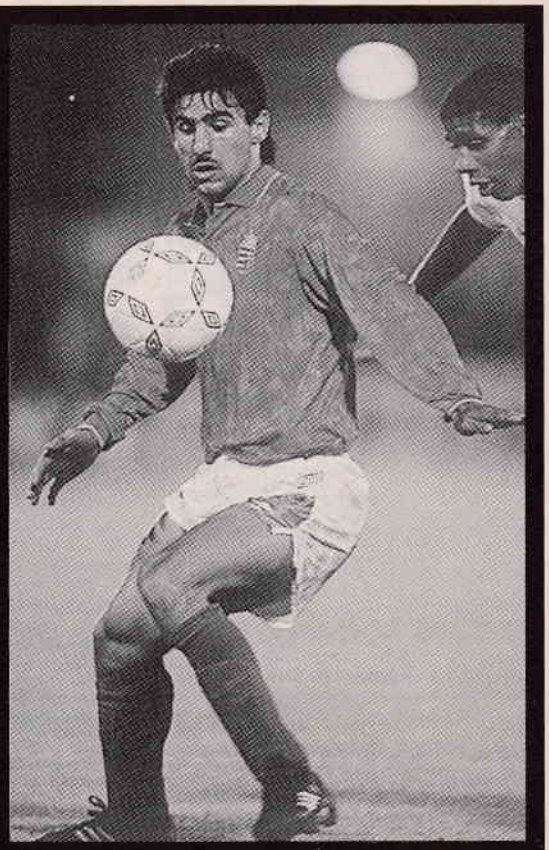
Joszef Pasztor, the Bekescsaba boss, says there is a 20 per cent chance. Zoltan Kereki, capped 37 times and in charge of the BVSC juniors for 18 months until Dr Georgy Mezey was appointed, reckons the prospects are five per cent positive!

Switzerland are one of three friendly opponents lined up for the national team in the spring, in Budapest on March 9. The others are Austria in Linz on March 23 and Denmark on April 20, at a venue to be arranged.

Kispest-Honved took two Nigerians, Emeka Ezengo, who has 41 caps and Esekiel Alamu, whose goals helped Stationery Stores to the semi-finals of the African Champions Cup, to Turkey for a four-team tournament against Besiktas, Galatasaray and Hamburg, with a view to signing both.

Parmalata FC, previously known as Videoton-Waltham, are hoping to have Zsolt Musznay, their former player, back from Antwerp, while Ferencvaros are awaiting Florian Albert's return from a leg operation.

BRIAN O'SULLIVAN



Talented . . . Hungarian midfielder Istvan Pisont.

RUSSIA .....

PLAYERS v COACH

World Cup place is at stake

TOP Russian players have confirmed their resolve to stay away from the 1994 World Cup if the national team continue to be coached by Pavel Sadyrin.

Igor Shalimov, Igor Dobrovolski, Alexander Mostovoi, Sergei Kiriakov, Andrei Ivanov, Vasili Kulkov and Sergei Yuran made their stand clear at a media conference at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. Several players went to Moscow from various parts of Europe, and Shamil Tarpischev, the presidential sports adviser, and Vitali Smirnov, Russia's Olympic Committee president, also were there.

Both supported the players, saying that they alone had won the right to play in the United States.

Sadyrin was not present at the conference, and Vyacheslav Koloskov, president of the Russian Football Federation, also was missing. He had said earlier that the Federation fully supported the present coach, blamed Shalimov and his friends for being "too money thirsty" and warned everybody that FIFA may replace Russia with Australia in the World Cup Finals if the internal conflict goes too far. Prize money for players is only one of the issues which started the confrontation. They also said they did not like Sadyrin's coaching style and methods, as well as the fact that he — unlike former manager Anatoli Byshovets — always sides with the Federation, not the players, when conflict arises.

Sadyrin is not only opposed by Russia's top foreign-based players, but also by those of Moscow Spartak, the League's best team.

That leaves the coach with a limited choice from among mostly second-rate players. Some of those he announced as team probables are not known to most Russian fans, who are upset about all this.

In the meantime, the schedule for the next Russian championship was announced. The tournament runs March 6 — November 6, with 16 teams playing each other twice.

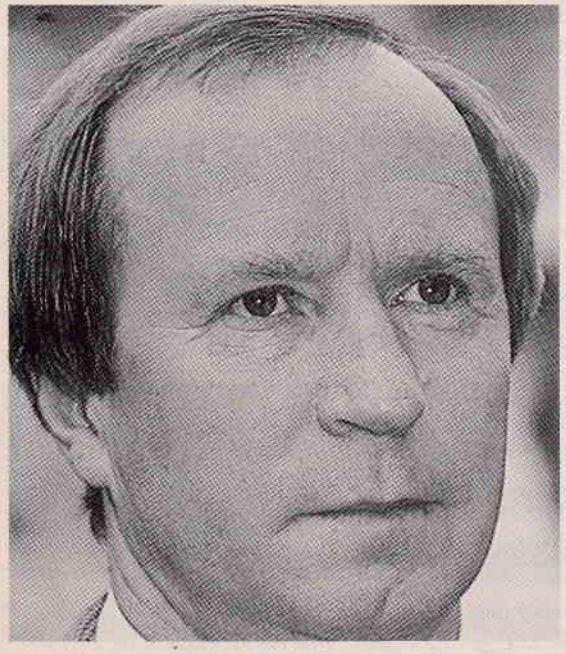
One of the most widely discussed pre-season possibilities is the return of Vagiz Khidiyatullin, former Moscow Spartak and national team player, one of the finest liberos of Soviet football. He has been coaching and playing for a minor club in France. Rumours say that Khidiyatullin, 35, will join either Spartak Vladikavkaz or Moscow Dinamo.

Moscow Spartak's top scorer, Vladimir Bestchastnykh, who is set to join Werder Bremen on June 30 this year, was robbed at gunpoint when he opened the door to strangers around midnight.

One of the three teenagers who took a video recorder, two leather jackets, £130 and some candies from the freezer, appeared to be a Spartak fan. He recognised Vladimir and begged the other two to spare his idol, but had no success.

Bestchastnykh and his wife — they married a couple of weeks earlier — were unhurt.

VICTOR GUSEV



Troubled . . . Russian national coach Pavel Sadyrin.

← 7,5 cm → 1

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND . . .

Big Jack ready to blood youngsters

THE Republic of Ireland begin their World Cup warm-up campaign with a game against Russia at Lansdowne Road on March 23.

This will be the first of five games which Jack Charlton has planned for his team in the run-up to the finals. The other games are against Holland (Tilburg, April 20), Bolivia (Dublin, May 24), Germany (Hanover, May 29) and the Czech Republic (Dublin, June 5).

With the Coca-Cola Cup Final on March 27 likely to claim some of his players, Charlton is certain to give first caps to a few new players against Russia.

Coventry's Phil Babb, Gary Kelly of Leeds and Celtic's Paul Byrne could all be in. There may be more, too. Every day the sports pages carry speculation on players willing to trace their Irish roots — will it be Mark Stein (Chelsea), Mark Beeney (Leeds) or the four Linighan brothers?

When Charlton does decide on his final 22 they will leave Dublin for their World Cup base in Orlando on June 6. The Irish, who play Mexico in Orlando, will fly to New York for their games against Italy and Norway. Charlton wanted to be based in New York and fly in and out of Orlando, but on medical advice he will take his squad to Florida to acclimatise to the heat.

Kevin Moran, who has given 14 years service to the Republic, has been granted a testimonial by the FAI. Moran, who won 69 caps, hopes to arrange a game between a Republic XI and Manchester United in Dublin next May.

Waiting . . . Babb.

Change of Hand

FORMER Irish manager Eoin Hand has left Shelbourne after three months in charge. He is expected to take up a coaching job in South Africa.

Eamonn Gregg, who quit Bohemians earlier in the season, is the new Shelbourne boss. And Turlough O'Connor, who began the season at Dundalk, has taken over at Bohemians. All these moves mean that the six clubs who finished in the top half of the League last season have all changed managers!

Meanwhile the top six who will play-off for the championship this season are Shamrock Rovers, Cork City, Shelbourne, Galway, Derry City and Bohemians. Rovers had 10 points to spare over Cork City at the cut-off stage and must be fancied to take the title for the 15th time. Manager Ray Treacy, however, will have to do without influential midfielders Paul Osam and Alan Byrne for the remainder of the season.

Brendan Ormsby took Waterford United to the First Division Shield Final in his first season in charge, only for the Blues to be beaten by Sligo Rovers. It was Sligo's first trophy since they won the FAI Cup in 1983.

This season's FAI Cup will not be played at Lansdowne Road. The Rugby Union ground has proved to be too expensive to rent for domestic games and the 1994 final will be played at either Tolka or Dalymount Park.

SEAN CREEDON

POLAND . . . . . .

'Government must help'

POLISH clubs have terrible financial problems. Selling players to Western clubs is essential if many clubs are to survive. In this way many young, talented players go abroad like Arkadiusz Kaliszan (Roda JC Kerkrade), Piotr Swierczewski (St Etienne, right) and Andrzej Kubica (Rapid Vienna) all from Poland's Under-21 team.

Older players are in turn brought from Second and Third Division sides into those from the First. The best example is Zenon Burzawa, 32, top scorer with 14 goals after the first half of the season. He played in the Second Division with Stilon Gorzow for many years and made his debut with the First Division team Tygodnik Miliarder Pniewy in August last year.

Meanwhile FIFA sent a warning to the Polish FA, because there are no stadiums in Poland of the required standard and they closed a stadium in Chorzow after a horrible fight between police and fans at the match against England last May.

The Polish FA asked the government for help because the Federation don't have enough money to modernize any of the four grounds in Chorzow, Poznan, Warsaw and Lodz where the national team would be able to play qualifying matches for Euro '96. There is still no answer.

DARIUSZ KUROWSKI

ALBANIA . . . . . .

Zeri's flying start

NEW COACH Vasillaq Zeri has made a good start with Dinamo, taking them to the semi-finals of the Albanian Cup.

The eight leading clubs qualified for the right to play off for places in the final, and Dinamo's team of youngsters won all their three matches — 2-1 against Tirana, 1-0 over Vllaznia and 1-0 against Elbasani. Zeri was one of the best strikers in Albania soccer during the 1970s, helping Dinamo to four championships.

Partizani seem likely to qualify from the other group, now that Ylli Shebu has rejoined the club after six months with Apollon in Greece.

Besa Kavaja have a "new" coach. He is Zihni Gjinali, taking over again 15 years after a previous spell in charge. Gjinali is now 68 years of age!

GEZIM NUSHI

TABLES

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AEK Athens	22	16	3	3	43	17	51
Panathinaikos	22	14	3	5	51	26	45
Aris	22	12	6	4	37	21	42
Olympiakos	22	10	10	2	35	21	40
PAOK	22	10	8	4	32	19	38
OFI Crete	21	9	5	7	40	26	32
Heraklis	22	8	7	7	38	30	31
Levadiakos	22	8	6	8	28	30	30
Doxa	21	8	5	8	25	35	29
Skoda-Xanthi	22	7	7	8	38	40	28
Panionios	22	7	5	10	34	40	26
Edessaikos	22	7	4	11	30	41	25
Larissa	22	6	6	10	29	36	24
Kalamaria	22	6	6	10	24	32	24
Apollon	22	5	8	9	19	29	23
Athinaikos	22	5	6	11	19	34	21
Panachaiki	22	4	6	12	23	43	18
Naoussa	22	4	1	17	26	53	13

MALTA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hibernians	9	7	2	0	18	4	16
Floriana	9	7	1	1	15	3	15
Hamrun Spartans	9	5	4	0	15	3	14
Valletta	10	6	2	2	16	8	14
Sliema Wanderers	9	3	2	4	8	8	8
Zurrieq	9	3	1	5	5	12	7
Birkirkara	9	3	0	6	7	12	6
St. Andrew's	10	3	0	7	11	20	6
Rabat Ajax	9	1	3	5	6	17	5
Mqabba	9	0	1	8	0	14	1

ISRAEL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mac. Haifa	20	16	4	0	48	12	52
Mac. Tel Aviv	20	16	2	2	50	14	50
Hap. Beersheba	20	12	5	3	30	14	41
Betar Jerusalem	20	10	5	5	39	27	35
Mac. Netanya	20	8	4	8	39	38	28
Mac. Herzliya	20	7	5	8	23	24	26
Bnei Yehuda	20	7	4	9	24	32	25
Hap. Petah Tikva	20	6	6	8	25	27	24
Hap. Tel Aviv	20	7	2	11	27	35	23
Hap. Holon	20	5	7	8	20	31	22
Ironi Ashdod	20	5	4	11	28	29	19
Mac. Petah Tikva	20	4	5	11	16	29	17
Hap. Kfar Sava	20	3	5	12	17	36	14
Hap. Haifa	20	2	6	12	12	50	12

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Benfica	17	12	4	1	39	17	28
Sporting Lisbon	17	11	3	3	28	12	25
FC Porto	17	9	6	2	27	10	24
Boavista	17	9	2	6	27	18	20
Maritimo	17	7	5	5	24	21	19
Estrela Amadora	17	6	6	5	19	15	18
Guimaraes	17	7	4	6	14	12	18
Salgueiros	17	8	2	7	26	26	18
Gil Vicente	17	6	6	5	18	23	18
Farense	17	8	0	9	21	28	16
Pacos Ferreira	17	5	5	7	15	20	15
Belenenses	17	6	3	8	18	25	15
Setubal	17	6	2	9	28	24	14
Sp. Braga	17	4	5	8	14	18	13
Beira-Mar	17	5	3	9	12	17	13
Famalicao	17	5	3	9	15	30	13
Uniao Madeira	17	4	3	10	17	28	11
Estoril	17	2	4	11	8	28	8

LUXEMBOURG

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Avenir Beggen	15	10	3	2	39	15	23
Grevenmacher	15	10	2	3	31	14	22
Jeunesse Esch	15	8	5	3	21	9	21
Dudelange	15	7	4	4	33	23	18
Union	15	8	2	5	21	19	18
CS Petange	15	3	6	6	28	29	12
Aris Bonnevoie	15	3	6	6	17	24	12
CS Fola Esch	15	2	6	7	14	26	10
Spora	15	3	1	11	15	36	7
Red Boys	15	2	3	10	18	42	7

UKRAINE . . . .

Fomenko says it's time to go

KIEV DYNAMO coach Mikhail Fomenko has resigned, even though the club had lost only three of their last 45 games.

He cited "health reasons" for his decision, but elimination from the Ukraine Cup by Second Division Veres Rivne, on away goals, must have had some bearing on it.

His resignation was rather surprisingly welcomed by leading players. Victor Leonenko, who was awarded the Crystal Ball prize by the weekly *Ukranian Football* as Player of the Year, explains: "Probably Fomenko lifted the quality of our game but he can't work with the players. After every game he considered us guilty of mistakes but did not recognise his own faults."

Fomenko took over the side at the end of November 1992, and achieved results which nobody expected. Dynamo became champions, won the Cup, and produced a major shock in Europe when beating Barcelona 3-1 in the first round of the Champions Cup.

Jozef Szabo has been appointed manager to the end of the season.

Eugeniy Rudakov is the new manager of bottom club Kremen. During his playing career he helped Kiev Dynamo and the Soviet Union national team out of some "hopeless" situations, and he will need all his skill and ability to save his new club from relegation.

Ukraine are in a European Championship group with Italy, Croatia, Lithuania, Estonia and Slovenia.

Coach Oleg Basilevich expressed his desire to start against Italy, saying: "We might as well take the bull by the horns right from the start."

OLEG ZADERNOVSKY

SLOVAKIA .....

Tough job for Venglos

Facing problems . . . Slovakian national manager Jozef Venglos.

SNOW covers the playing fields, club accountants look for the black rather than the red in their books, and the coaches seek new formulae for success in the new Slovenska Liga after the conclusion of part one of the "separate" championship.

Some clubs are balancing their books with sales abroad which, of course, now includes the Czech Republic. Slovak players see this as a reasonable opportunity: they have little or no language problem, the Czech clubs have more money and the weak Slovak crown has slipped in value.

Inter Bratislava already have lost Rudolf Tehak, vital to their back four, to Drnovice, the Moravian club rivalling FC Boby Brno locally and holding a respectable mid-table place.

It is unfortunate for Slovak soccer that others probably will take this path and further weaken domestic football.

A festering problem is the tension between the Federation and champions Slovan, who are planning a winter tour to Argentina and are unwilling to release players such as Zeman to national manager Jozef Venglos, their former chief, for his squad's visit to Dubai for a competition including the United Arab Emirates and Morocco.

The Slovaks also are unable to select Footballer of the Year Peter Dubovsky, needed by Real Madrid, or St Etienne's Lubomir Moravcik but, surprisingly, Ancona may release Milos Glonek. There is a chance for the fringe members to make a claim before planned friendlies in Slovakia with Greece, the first ever official international in peacetime, and in Dublin with the Republic of Ireland, provisionally scheduled for the week before Jack Charlton's side depart for the US.

Now that the European draw is known Venglos can get down to some serious scheduling but his Federation are disappointed as their chances of reaching the Finals in England are not high and the visiting teams, with the exception of the French, are unlikely to fill Bratislava's Tehelne Pole ground or Kosice's renovated All-Sports Arena.

The SFZ could do with the income to finance visits to Tel Aviv and Baku and marketing associates will also be unamused at having drawn difficult opponents in Romania and Poland. So Venglos, with the help of Kocian, will hope for more luck than he had at Villa Park.

ROMANIA .....

Anghel with time on his side

In charge . . . Iordanescu.

A SHORTER break, with football going on longer into December, means 21 fixtures have been played and more time is available to Anghel Iordanescu to prepare for the World Cup Finals, where his team start with a game against the new stars from Colombia in Los Angeles.

After the Swiss in Detroit, the first phase closes with a potential decider with the hosts in Pasadena.

February was being spent in a training camp in Switzerland and the team were to move to a rather different climate in Hong Kong for a friendly with the National XI and a second game against Denmark.

With the end of the championship at home in early May, Iordanescu takes charge of his squad again for another training camp. Opposition are sought for the late Spring and, presumably, there will be a farewell match in Bucharest before departure for the US.

When the domestic season closed Steaua were leading the First Division by a street, having defeated FC Brasov 2-0 at home in their last game of 1993.

Eternal rivals Dinamo trail by seven points having lost five games and will be severely challenged by "U" Craiova, an improving side who ended the year drawing 1-1 at mid-table Arad.

Electroputere Craiova, however, have gone backwards as the student team went up the table and now will have to work hard to avoid slipping in to the relegation mire with Poli Timisoara and Sportul Studentesc, rather than dreaming of a second chance in the UEFA Cup.

Craoiveanu, appropriately of "U" Craoiva, leads the goalscorers with 14.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Winter King will need Midas touch

SORTING out the national team's programme is the task of Dusan Uhrin, the former Dynamo Kobylisy player and, more recently the successful manager of the former army club Cheb and Sparta Prague.

Two years ago Uhrin, the "Winter King", took the tiny club on the German border to the top of the then all-Czechoslovak League by Christmas before departing for the Letna. A modestly-placed Sparta side under his guidance then stormed to the title and now he needs to produce some more magic internationally.

Czech chances of qualifying for the European Championship look to be fair in a group Holland will surely top but in which second place could well be between the Norwegians and Uhrin's team. The former CSSR have an excellent record against both their main European qualifying group opponents; six wins and a draw in nine matches with the Dutch and three victories from three games with Norway.

Their last competitive match against Holland, in the 1980 European Championship in Milan, ended in a 1-1 draw and the most recent, a friendly in 1986 in Prague, ended 1-0 for a team of eight Czechs and three Slovaks.

Norway have never enjoyed any success against Czechoslovak opposition, so the portents are good for Uhrin as he seeks spring friendlies for a separate Czech side who will be playing as such for the first time since England's visit to play Bohemia 86 years ago.

The backbone of his team is likely to come from Sparta and those playing abroad. While the foreign-based players will be preoccupied with club football, Sparta's should have little trouble finding time for international football with another surge for the championship unlikely to be halted much by a Ceske Budejovice side who surely cannot keep up their Autumn form.

And Slavia still have considerable worries over the unfinished renovation of "Eden" and continuing negotiations with ex-President Korbel. What former goalkeeper Frantisek Planicka, who still attends club AGM's and matches as he nears his 90th birthday, makes of the concrete and financial mess at his old stamping ground, is difficult to assess.

Perhaps it is more likely Sparta will have to fight off Banik Ostrava for the title rather than Slavia or Ceske Budejovice, once "kopana" pushes ice hockey off the sports pages.

BULGARIA .....

Penev has his plate full

AS the national squad were beginning their visit to North and Central America, they heard news of the European Championship draw. It will only temporarily have deflected Dimitar Penev's attention from the friendly match with Mexico, in San Diego, but now he knows not only what awaits him in Chicago and Dallas but also in a string of qualifying ties for Euro '96.

Bulgaria will not relish two games with Berti Vogts's Germany in Group 7 but will be looking to inch out the Welsh and take second spot. Wales and Bulgaria met in the competition in 1983, when each won 1-0 at home.

Both were eliminated by the Yugoslavs, though, and will be hungry for success in a competition in which both have poor records.

Penev, then, will be out to hold the Germans at home, defeat the minnows from Albania, Moldova and Georgia heavily at home and scramble for points in the return games.

International football looks likely to overshadow the domestic game in the coming half of the season and in 1994-95. There is no Champions Cup soccer to look forward to this spring, so the national squad will have to be given priority.

Penev is hoping to find African opposition in April to follow up their March friendly with Spain and an attractive game in Sofia is planned before they leave for the US.

When the League restarts in March Levski will be parading a new midfielder, Magdi Tolba, an Egyptian signed from Greek club PAOK.

The Romanian, Petra Grigoras, probably will not be available as his fee looks not to have been paid in full by the Bulgarian champions. CSKA, for their part, will be presided over by one of the big noises at the export firm Kintex, Peter Kalpaktichev. His firm specialises in armaments so perhaps he can put CSKA back on target.

BOB VAUGHAN

WORLD PRESS

THIS month's worldwide selection of editorials includes pieces on why the sports-mad American public do not take to soccer, FIFA secretary Sepp Blatter explaining the finer points of rule making, booming gates in Holland, and Graeme Souness's failure to win over the fans during his time as manager at Liverpool.

USA TODAY

THE rest of the world, we keep getting reminded, loves soccer. Surely, we must be missing out on something.

Uh, isn't that what the Russians told us about Communism?

But don't feel guilty. There's a good reason you don't care about soccer, even if it is the national passion of Cameroon, Uruguay and Madagascar.

It's because you are an American, and hating soccer is more American than mom's apple pie, driving a pickup or spending Saturday afternoons channel-surfing with the remote control.

Stop and think for a moment, my fellow Americans, about what you love most in sports.

In football, it's a John Elway touch-down pass, soaring downfield in a tight spiral. A catch on the finger tips by Jerry Rice. A bruising straight-arm by Emmitt Smith.

In baseball, it's a Roger Clemens fastball that makes you wonder if the radar gun is broken. A Frank Thomas home run swing that drops a pearl into the upper deck. A diving grab by Ozzie Smith's outstretched leather.

In basketball, it's a thunder-dunk by Charles Barkley (right). A blocked shot by Hakeem Olajuwon. A no-look pass from Isiah Thomas.

Elsewhere, it's Evander Holyfield's jab or Riddick Bowe's uppercut. Mario Lemieux's slap shot or Patrick Roy's glove save. Boris Becker's booming serve or Steffi Graf's forehand. Payne Stewart blasting out of the bunker or a drive by John Daly.

See a trend here? It's all arms and hands, things that happen from the waist up. From Babe Ruth to Muhammad Ali to Michael Jordan, that's where the sports action that Americans love always has been.

The World Cup draw was made in Las Vegas, home of the one-armed bandit. In sports, soccer is the no-armed bandit.

The only sport we've had that has been as limited as soccer to the thigh, ankle and foot is track. And guess what? We only care about track every four years, and only because of the Olympics.

In soccer, hand-to-eye co-ordination stops once a player is done lacing his shoes.

And if any of us real Americans could have our sports fantasy fulfilled, isn't being a placekicker the last thing we would choose?

They call it football, but the reason so many people are upset about the current NFL season is because feet have decided so many games.

What was the all-time low in Super Bowl history? When Garo Yepremian — a kicker — tried to throw a pass for Miami in the 1973 Super Bowl.

There is no more damning a phrase in sports than "wide left." OK, maybe one-two-three and out, punt.

That's what soccer is. A series of wide lefts and punts, with a lot of swarming in between.

This is why Alex Karras once proposed tightening immigration standards to whatever extent necessary to keep placekickers from clearing customs.

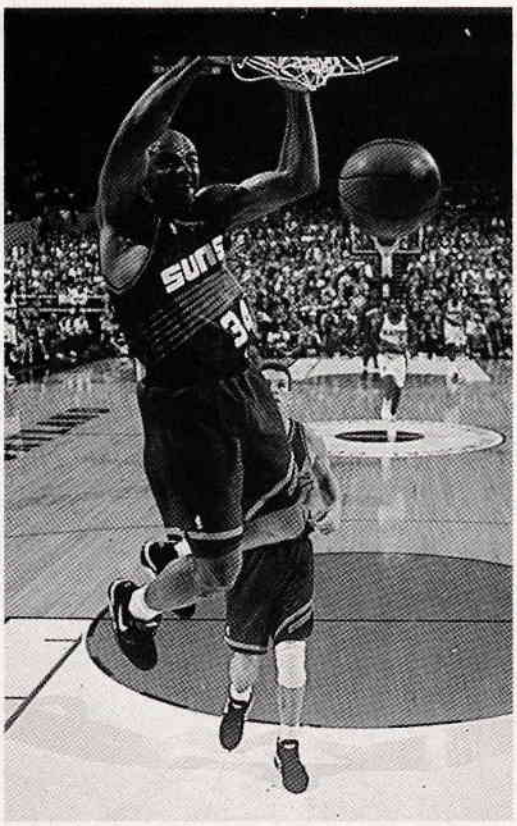
Karras was tired of Sundays where real men slaved away in the mud for four quarters, and then some skinny Bulgarian who didn't know how to put on his shoulder pads would trot out to decide the game.

Karras would mimic their post-game quotes, saying: "I keek a touchdown."

In essence, soccer is to sports what athlete's foot is to injuries.

So yes, the World Cup is coming. But feel free to dodge and dismiss it, and feel good about that. As someone who knows what real sports are, you are under no obligation to play footsie with the rest of the world.

— *TOM WEIR*



KICKER (Germany)

FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter criticises that section of the media which seemingly never tire of accusing the world's body of manipulation. He writes:

"When Diego Maradona claimed four years ago that FIFA cheated at the draw for the 1990 World Cup, the media wanted to know what steps we are taking to punish him. But as usual our organisation has more important things to do than reply to absurd accusations.

"But the journalists too should be more responsible. Recently quite a few of them seemed to be facing unsolvable problems during the draw for the 1994 finals. Because they either didn't understand the FIFA directives which were given in great detail, or didn't attend the Press conference, some of them complained of manipulation and screamed 'cheating, cheating'.

"Their anger was clearly misplaced. If there was cheating, then where? Was Germany allowed weak opposition, or the US paired with strong rivals? That FIFA do not place in the initial groups nations from the same continent, which is easy to do apart from the Europeans, is a method nearly as old as the World Cup itself.

"He who suspects betrayal and lack of consideration demonstrates a patent lack of understanding and vision."

VOETBAL (Holland)

DESPITE the economic recession on the Continent and the increase in television coverage — including live matches — attendance figures in Dutch football during the first half of the season went up by more than 15 per cent.

They have also learned much from the security organisation in English football and intend to follow this up in plans for the future. The sale of season tickets also went up.

Cees Wolzabk, director of professional football with the Dutch FA, said: "We can talk this season about less trouble in the grounds and that has helped to convince women and children that football can be safe to watch."

That is backed by Will Van Rhee, security manager of the Dutch FA, who said: "If people do not come to football games asking themselves when the first fight will start, that takes away their fear of football that has been with us in the past, and clubs, to their credit, have introduced their own ideas. For instance Willem II have a second section of their stand reserved for older people and Volendam have introduced a special family stand.

"It's not over yet, but it is going in the right direction. Almost all clubs are concentrating on better accommodation, better service and better safety for the public.

"As far as safety is concerned from next season we will concentrate on the stewards system, much of which we have learned from England.

"We believe the stewards are more important than police dogs and weapons. I must say I am most optimistic."

DAILY MAIL (England)

EACH of the past four Liverpool managers won the championship, although it should be recalled that even Bill Shankly required a full seven seasons before laying hands on the trophy.

Shanks's success was in delivering Liverpool a permanent place in European football, which set them up for years of domestic pre-eminence.

Contrast that to one FA Cup triumph under Graeme Souness — and that against Second Division sides in both the semi-final and final — and the most meagre return in the League, and you understand why frustration has grown to deepest resentment at Anfield.

— *NEIL HARMAN*

● *Mr Harman's arithmetic is at fault. Shankly was appointed Liverpool manager in December 1959, when the club were in the Second Division. They clinched promotion in April 1962 and won the League title in April 1964, when Shankly had been in charge for four years and four months.*

WORLD CUP USA94 COUNTDOWN

WELCOME TO OUR INDISPENSABLE GUIDE TO THE 15TH WORLD CUP FINALS TOURNAMENT. OVER THE NEXT FOUR ISSUES, WE WILL BE PROFILING ALL 24 COMPETING NATIONS ALPHABETICALLY AND KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE WITH ALL THE LATEST NEWS, VIEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS AS JUNE 17 DRAWS NEAR.

WE BEGIN THIS MONTH WITH A LOOK AT THE FIRST SIX COUNTRIES — ARGENTINA, BELGIUM, BOLIVIA, BRAZIL, BULGARIA, CAMEROON — AND A REPORT ON WHAT THE LOS ANGELES EARTHQUAKE MEANS TO US '94.

LATEST FROM THE US

BY PAUL GARDNER

The show goes on as quake hits Los Angeles

THEY'RE calling it the greatest natural disaster in United States history.

The massive earthquake (6.6 on the Richter Scale) that struck Los Angeles at 4.30 in the morning of Monday January 17 has caused over $30 billion in damage, and 57 deaths.

But it will not, of course, prevent the staging of the 1994 World Cup.

The show must go on, and anyway the World Cup has plenty of experience in this sort of thing. The Chileans were hit by a massive quake in 1960 as they were preparing for the 1962 event.

In 1985 a huge quake shattered Mexico City and left over 10,000 people dead . . . but the 1986 tournament went ahead. So, of course, World Cup US '94 will proceed. The organisers wasted no time in calling in engineers to do all sorts of tests on the Pasadena Rose Bowl, the stadium to be used for the final on July 17.

They found everything to be in order. Like much of LA, they'd been expecting this, so there had been much anti-earthquake reinforcement done on the stadium over the last few years.

Los Angeles airport is operating normally, and there have been no reports of damage to any of the hotels that the World Cup will use. The organising committee's offices — at the top of a 44-story building estimated to sway at least 16 feet — were shaken up.

Scott LeTellier said: "It looked like a hurricane had blown through here, computers and television sets were bounced all over the place, pictures had come off the walls, files were spread over the floor.

"No serious damage, though — we spent Tuesday with the technology people and a clean-up crew, and we were back to full speed by Wednesday."

Some of the World Cup employees were not so lucky. Monique Fortunat, an administrative assistant in the international department, was woken up at 4.30 by crashing glass and grinding masonry as her house in Santa Monica collapsed about her. Monique got out, but the house was a total loss.

Like many other people, she is now living with relatives. And like many others, she is struggling to get to work.

In a city designed for drivers, the destruction of roads — in particular the Santa Monica Freeway — is causing chaotic traffic conditions, and undoubtedly will still pose serious problems at World Cup time.

That freeway would have been the direct road link between the FIFA VIP hotel in Beverly Hills and the Rose Bowl. "We don't know how long it'll take for them to repair things," said LeTellier, "but clearly it won't be done before we kick off in June.

"We're going to have to revise some of our timings — things like the period allowed to get from hotels or from the airport to the stadium."

As you were on extra time

● *SUDDEN DEATH will not, after all, be the lot of the 1994 World Cup finals. After lengthy debate within the corridors of power, FIFA and the organisers have decided to stick by the old, discredited system of 30 minutes extra time and then a penalty shoot-out to decide matches in the later rounds which end all-square after 90 minutes.*

All over for shooting star Maradona?

● *THE always uncertain prospects of Diego Maradona competing in the World Cup finals faded further after astonishing incidents following his sacking after just five games by Newell's Old Boys. Maradona barricaded himself in his home and turned a water hose and then an air gun on journalists waiting outside. Five people were treated for pellet wounds.*

WORLD CUP FINALS RECORDS

ARGENTINA
Final appearances: 10 (1930-34, 1958-66, 1974-90).
Best performance: winners 1978 and 1986.
Biggest win: 6-0 v Peru (1978).
Biggest defeat: 6-1 v Czechoslovakia (1958).
Record: P48 W24 D9 L15 F82 A59

BELGIUM
Final appearances: 8 (1930-38, 1954, 1970, 1982-90).
Best performance: 4th place (1986).
Biggest win: 4-3 v Soviet Union (1986).
Biggest defeat: 5-2 v Germany (1934).
Record: P25 W7 D4 L14 F33 A49

BOLIVIA
Final appearances: 2 (1930, 1950).
Best performance: 1st round (1930 and 1950).
Biggest win: none.
Biggest defeat: 8-0 v Uruguay (1950).
Record: P3 W0 D0 L3 F0 A16

BRAZIL
Final appearances: 14 (1930-90).
Best performance: winners 1958, 1962 and 1970.
Biggest win: 7-1 v Sweden (1950).
Biggest defeat: 4-2 v Hungary (1954).
Record: P66 W44 D11 L11 F148 A65

BULGARIA
Final appearances: 5 (1962-74, 1986).
Best performance: 2nd round (1986).
Biggest win: none.
Biggest defeat: 6-1 v Hungary (1962).
Record: P16 W0 D6 L10 F11 A35

CAMEROON
Final appearances: 2 (1982, 1990).
Best performance: quarter-finalists 1990.
Biggest win: 2-1 v Romania (1990), 2-1 v Colombia (1990).
Biggest defeat: 4-0 v Soviet Union (1990).
Record: P8 W3 D3 L2 F8 A10

ARGENTINA

Jumping for joy . . . but will Argentina have anything to celebrate in America this summer?

Yesterday's men?

Basile struggles with tactical troubles

BY ERIC WEIL

LAST year the Argentinian national team took their unbeaten record to 31 full international games — a record which may never be beaten — and qualified for the World Cup finals for the sixth time running. So who's complaining?

Almost everybody, because in soccer you are only as good as your last result . . . and the last official result was a 5-0 home defeat by Colombia which almost put Argentina out of the World Cup and which had the rest of the world gaping and suddenly discovering Colombia as a world soccer power.

The truth is however that long before that 31-match unbeaten record had ended three weeks earlier, with a 2-1 defeat in Colombia, the team were stumbling and often lucky not to lose or get away with a win — with wrong tactics, little team-work and individually erratic performances — and they made sure of a place in the World Cup finals with a goal which was meant to be a centre and was then helped into the net by an Australian defender.

In last year's South American Championship in Ecuador, where Argentina retained the title after some close shaves, they met Colombia twice and managed to draw games they might well have lost, so when they had to play for an automatic World Cup place in the same group as Colombia, the warnings were there and the defeats against them should not have come as a surprise.

Worse was to come when Argentina only scraped into the finals on a 2-1 aggregate against Australia with that goal mentioned previously. But as I said before, you are as good as your last match, the last match of the year having been a 2-1 victory over World Cup-holders Germany in Miami, in spite of the absence of several key players with European clubs. So now everybody here is happy again and Argentina have been installed as one of the favourites.

Argentina have played in 10 World Cup finals tournaments and in the last four they have been winners twice and losing finalists once which, coupled to their recent 31-match unbeaten record, is enough to put them among the favourites.

A comparatively easy first-round group draw — with Nigeria, Greece and Bulgaria — may help, but if Argentina do not change their strategies, mainly in attack, they will continue to find goals difficult to get and nothing will help.

Of the 36 players which have been alternating in the national team lately only six were in the last World Cup squad — goalkeeper Sergio Goycochea, defender Oscar Ruggeri, midfielders Diego Maradona and Jose Basualdo and forwards Abel Balbo and Claudio Caniggia — and coach Alfio Basile is likely to pick at least five of them again. But in most of their matches recently Argentina have hardly looked like world beaters.

Goalkeeping is no worry. Goycochea and

Luis Islas are both excellent keepers with international experience, but the former is more popular and preferred because of his penalty heroics.

The defence problem is in the middle. Ruggeri is past his best and their zonal marking often falls down. The midfield tends to be slow and imprecise. There are some good players, but they are seldom in good form at the same time, and there is a lack of team-work and the players tend to get into each others way. There are several playmakers, Diego Simeone, Fernando Redondo and Diego Maradona for example, with different ideas.

Maradona was brought back into the team by popular request after the 5-0 debacle against Colombia. He did a good job in lifting up the low morale and spraying precision passes, but he is, of course, way past his best, hardly moves and slows midfield play down terribly when on the field. He is also frequently injured and has said that if his injuries persist he will have to think of giving up football soon . . . even before the World Cup.

On the whole, the team are too static because the players do not know how to play without the ball. But the worst problem is curiously in attack although in Abel Balbo, leading scorer Gabriel Batistuta and Claudio Caniggia they have three of the most dangerous forwards in the world and Ramon Medina Bello is not to be discounted either. All of them are goal getters as they have shown in the past.

But there is a problem with tactics. Basile will seldom play with more than two players up (4-4-2). They are disconnected and the support they get is erratic. As a result they are well-marked and seldom in scoring positions. The fact that Batistuta and the others can make goals out of nothing is not good enough for consistently good results.

'Long before that 31-match unbeaten record ended . . . the team were stumbling and often lucky not to lose or get away with a win — with wrong tactics, little team-work and individually erratic performances'

I have seen Argentina more dangerous with fewer men on the field. In last year's World Cup qualifying match against Paraguay, both sides were left with nine men in the second half and Argentina suddenly clicked in attack with Simeone and Redondo joining in. Argentina scored three goals for the only time last year.

Basile's favourite World Cup line-up presently seems to be: Goycochea, H. Diaz, Borelli, Ruggeri, MacAllister, Franco, Redonda, Simeone, Maradona or Rodriguez, Caniggia and Batistuta.

With so many good players available, the team should play better, but there are some questions. Will Maradona be in condition to play in the World Cup? Having left Newell's Old Boys, by mutual agreement, that is open to question.

Will Caniggia be as good as before when he returns to soccer only a month before the start of the World Cup — when the Argentinian team assembles with their European-based players — after his lengthy suspension for drug abuse?

Will Dario Franco, a key man in midfield, recapture form when he returns to action at about the same time after a double leg fracture last July in the South American Championship?

The trouble is that team-mates will go easy on him during preparations, but the opposition in the World Cup will not.

The biggest question is however, will Basile change his tactics to make the team more productive?

HOW THEY QUALIFIED
SOUTH AMERICA
GROUP A

01.08.93	Colombia v Paraguay	0-0
01.08.93	Peru v **Argentina**	0-1
08.08.93	Paraguay v **Argentina**	1-3
08.08.93	Peru v Colombia	0-1
15.08.93	Colombia v **Argentina**	2-1
15.08.93	Paraguay v Peru	2-1
22.08.93	**Argentina** v Peru	2-1
22.08.93	Paraguay v Colombia	1-1
29.08.93	**Argentina** v Paraguay	0-0
29.08.93	Colombia v Peru	4-0
05.09.93	**Argentina** v Colombia	0-5
05.09.93	Peru v Paraguay	2-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
COLOMBIA	6	4	2	0	13	2	10
Argentina	6	3	1	2	7	9	7
Paraguay	6	1	4	1	6	7	6
Peru	6	0	1	5	4	12	1

Argentina qualify for play-off v Australia.

Play-off
1st leg
31.10.93 Australia v **Argentina** 1-1
2nd leg
17.11.93 **Argentina** v Australia 1-0
Argentina won 2-1 on agg

1994 WORLD CUP SCHEDULE

FIRST ROUND

GROUP D
ARGENTINA
GREECE
NIGERIA
BULGARIA

21.06.94	Argentina v Greece	Boston
21.06.94	Nigeria v Bulgaria	Dallas
25.06.94	Argentina v Nigeria	Boston
26.06.94	Bulgaria v Greece	Chicago
30.06.94	Greece v Nigeria	Boston
30.06.94	Argentina v Bulgaria	Dallas

the COACH

Alfio BASILE. Aged 50 (born November 1, 1943). Was an outstanding defender with Racing Club when they won the Fist Division, Libertadores Cup and Intercontinental Cup in 1966-67 when they created the still standing record of going through 39 league games unbeaten. Since 1975 he has coached several clubs, including Racing Club and at the end of 1990 he was named national team coach replacing Carlos Bilardo. Under him Argentina have won two successive South American titles (1991 and 193) and created a new record of going through 31 internationals unbeaten. A run which started with his first international early in 1991 and ended against Colombia last August.

the SQUAD

Sergio GOYCOCHEA. Goalkeeper. Aged 30 (born October 17, 1963) with 45 caps. River Plate. Argentina's hero in penalty shoot-outs in the 1990 World Cup when he was third-choice goalkeeper. One of the best stoppers of penalties and point-blank shots with good positioning and anticipation.

Luis ISLAS. Goalkeeper. Aged 28 (born December 22, 1965) with 20 caps. Independiente. Tall, safe, with good reach, has had virtually no international chances since refusing to go as No. 2 to Italia '90.

Norberto SCOPONI. Goalkeeper. Aged 33 (born January 13, 1961) with no caps. Newell's Old Boys. Veteran and experienced.

Fabian BASUALDO. Defender. Aged 29 (born February 26, 1964) with 24 caps. River Plate. Good at going forward, but seldom shoots at goal while seldom finding forwards in good position under present team set-up.

Jorge BORELLI. Defender. Aged 29 (born November 2, 1964) with 12 caps. Racing Club. Has had his outstanding and poor matches which may have more to do with the zone (central defence) which is sometimes Argentina's poor point.

Sergio VAZQUEZ. Defender. Aged 28 (born November 23, 1965) with 21 caps. Universidad Catolica (Chile). Alternates with Borelli in central defence, same characteristics.

Oscar RUGGERI. Defender. Aged 32 (born January 26, 1962) with 87 caps. San Lorenzo. Most experienced player in the team with two World Cups behind him and most caps. Good header, but past his best.

Hernan DIAZ. Defender. Aged 29, with 16 caps. River Plate. Good club defender recently brought back into the national side to bolster defence.

Carlos MAC ALLISTER. Defender. Aged 25 (born March 6, 1968) with 3 caps. Boca Juniors. Brought into the national team following the 5-0 defeat against Colombia after having shone in the league as a flank defender.

Nestor GOROSITO. Midfielder. Aged 28 (born May 14, 1965) with 15 caps. San Lorenzo. Generally considered a substitute.

Diego SIMEONE. Midfielder. Aged 23 (born April 28, 1970) with 29 caps. Sevilla (Spain). Possibly Argentina's best playmaker who escaped criticism when the whole team was sagging last year.

Fernando REDONDO. Midfielder. Aged 24 (born June 6, 1969) with 14 caps. Tenerife (Spain). Has had some outstanding games in midfield, but tends to disappear from the game.

Dario FRANCO. Midfielder. Aged 25 (born January 17, 1969) with 19 caps. Real Zaragoza (Spain). Appears slow, but good at getting out of difficult spots. Combines well with forwards and his height is advantage near goal. Has been out of soccer since double leg fracture in Copa America last July.

Diego MARADONA. Midfielder. Aged 33 (born October 30, 1960) with 83 caps. Recently left Newell's Old Boys and currently without a club. Came into the team as its youngest member in 1977 and is now the oldest. He was brought back into the team after the 5-0 defeat against Colombia, although well past his best. He nevertheless did well in distributing pin-point passes, but perhaps his major contribution was lifting the team's low morale as captain.

Hugo PEREZ. Midfielder. Aged 25 (born October 6, 1968) with 3 caps. Independiente. One of the few young revelations, an attacking midfielder.

Leonardo RODRIGUEZ. Midfielder. Aged 27 (born August 27, 1966) with 23 caps. Borussia Dotmund (Germany). Expected to share the left midfield position with Maradona. Was a regular until Maradona came back, but says he would also love to play with him.

Ramon MEDINA BELLO. Forward. Aged 27 (born April 29, 1966) with 12 caps. Yokohama Marinos (Japan). Good mixture of speed and strength.

Alberto COSTA. Forward. Aged 27 (born August 23, 1966) with 1 caps. Boca Juniors. Good shot, but somewhat heavy and not very agile.

Gabriel BATISTUTA. Forward. Aged 25 (born February 1, 1969) with 26 caps. Fiorentina (Italy). Argentina's leading scorer who creates goals out of nothing in spite of always being heavily marked and receiving little support.

Abel BALBO. Forward. Aged 27 (born June 1, 1966) with 13 caps. AS Roma (Italy). Another dangerous attacker with a good eye for goal and now with plenty of experience, like Batistuta, of how to beat defences in the Italian league.

Claudio CANIGGIA. Aged 27 (born January 9, 1967) with 43 caps. AS Roma (Italy). More experienced than Balbo and Batistuta, but will finish his ban for drug abuse only a month before the finals start and may not be back to form.

BELGIUM

Devil of a job

Van Himst waits on Weber

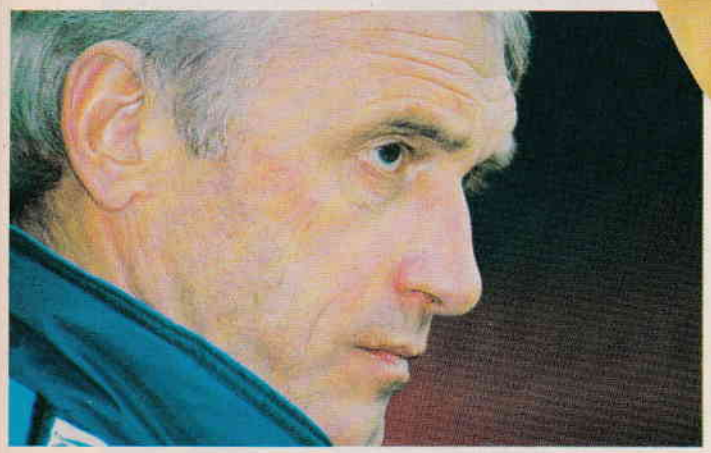
BY KEIR RADNEDGE

BELGIUM have already sprung one World Cup finals surprise — by managing to achieve a place among the top six seeds. Oddly, that may have worked against them because they were then guaranteed a tough challenge from their next-ranked opponents, who turned out to be old rivals and neighbours Holland.

So, just as officials from both countries were sitting down together to plan their joint bid to host the 2000 European Championship, they were also preparing for a desperate tussle in the United States in June.

Belgium have long been nicknamed the Red Devils but that tag owes more to domestic optimism than international achievement. True, Belgium secured their World Cup seeding thanks to consistency in reaching the second round in 1982, the semi-finals in 1986 and the second round in 1990. But "devil" is one quality which has been absent from their play — how else can one explain top Anderlecht striker Luc Nilis having failed to score in 22 international appearances?

Belgium has produced many admirable footballers over recent years: Jan Ceulemans, Franky Van der Elst and Enzo Scifo for example. But their greatest player remains, intriguingly, the man who manages them at the World Cup



Guiding lights . . . coach Paul Van Himst (above) and midfielder Enzo Scifo (right).

finals, Paul Van Himst. He knows, better than anyone, the weakness with which he must cope.

Van Himst says: "It's always been our problem: we just don't possess the strikers to give us that little edge at top level in international football."

This is precisely why Belgian fans are watching not only the progress of their team out on the pitch but the progress through the parliamentary system of a piece of minor, private legislation "starring" the Croat-born top-scoring centre-forward Josip Weber, of Cercle Bruges.

Weber decided last year to take out Belgian citizenship and, because he had never played for Croatia, that suddenly raised the possibility that he could be eligible to lead Belgium's attack at US '94.

Weber is not seeking a flag of convenience. He and his family have been happily settled in Belgian for four years and have no wish to return to a homeland ravaged by civil war.

Weber says: "Belgium is my home. I would be as proud as any Belgian- born citizen to play football for this country. In fact, it would be even more of an honour for me because Belgium has given my family a home. I owe a great deal to this country."

With 20 goals this term, Weber is in a rich vein of goal-scoring form. Most of his paperwork has now been completed and his late arrival could yet allow Van Himst to create one of the most exotic of World Cup striking partnerships with Weber partnering the Italian-based, Brazilian-born Luis Oliveira.

This partnership, with the creative midfield support of Scifo (whose family background is, of course, Italian) could make a dramatic difference to Belgium's prospects at US '94.

Belgium had, at one stage, threatened to be the first European nation — after the seeded Germans — to secure a place in the finals. They won their first six qualifying matches and went to Wales in March last year needing only one point for security. They lost, instead, by 2-0 and a further defeat by Romania meant it was not until the last moment and the last match, against Czechoslovakia, that Belgium crept in.

For all those last-minute stumbles, Belgium bring to the World Cup finals a wealth of experience. In goal, Michel Preud'homme has been one of Europe's best keepers for more than a decade. In defence, Van der Elst screens his back four with a resolute tackle and an uncanny ability to second-guess opposing attacks and Georges Grun will add his strength of physique and character after a long injury lay-off.

In front of them Belgium possess any number of diligent midfielders able to lay the foundations on which Scifo can build his attacks.

Add a couple of forwards with proven striking ability and Belgium could be dangerous outsiders indeed.

'Devil is one quality which has been absent from their play – how else can one explain top Anderlecht striker Luc Nilis having failed to score in 22 international appearances?'

HOW THEY QUALIFIED EUROPE GROUP 4

22.04.92	**Belgium** v Cyprus	1-0
06.05.92	Romania v Faroe Islands	7-0
20.05.92	Romania v Wales	5-1
03.06.92	Faroe Islands v **Belgium**	0-3
18.06.92	Faroe Islands v Cyprus	0-2
02.09.92	Czechoslovakia v **Belgium**	1-2
09.09.92	Wales v Faroe Islands	6-0
23.09.92	Czechoslovakia v Faroe Islands	4-0
14.10.92	**Belgium** v Romania	1-0
14.10.92	Cyprus v Wales	0-1
14.11.92	Romania v Czechoslovakia	1-1
18.11.92	**Belgium** v Wales	2-0
29.11.92	Cyprus v Romania	1-4
13.02.93	Cyprus v **Belgium**	0-3
24.03.93	Cyprus v Czechoslovakia	1-1
31.03.93	Wales v **Belgium**	2-0
14.04.93	Romania v Cyprus	2-1
25.04.93	Cyprus v Faroe Islands	3-1
28.04.93	Czechoslovakia v Wales	1-1
22.05.93	**Belgium** v Faroe Islands	3-0
02.06.93	Czechoslovakia v Romania	5-2
06.06.93	Faroe Islands v Wales	0-3
16.06.93	Faroe Islands v Czechoslovakia	0-3
08.09.93	Wales v Czechoslovakia	2-2
08.09.93	Faroe Islands v Romania	0-4
13.10.93	Romania v **Belgium**	2-1
13.10.93	Wales v Cyprus	2-0
27.10.93	Czechoslovakia v Cyprus	3-0
17.11.93	Wales v Romania	1-2
17.11.93	**Belgium** v Czechoslovakia	0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ROMANIA	10	7	1	2	29	12	15
BELGIUM	10	7	1	2	16	5	15
Czechoslovakia	10	4	5	1	21	9	13
Wales	10	5	2	3	19	12	12
Cyprus	10	2	1	7	8	18	5
Faroe Islands	10	0	0	10	1	38	0

1994 WORLD CUP SCHEDULE
FIRST ROUND

GROUP F
BELGIUM
MOROCCO
HOLLAND
SAUDI ARABIA

19.06.94	Belgium v Morocco	Orlando
20.06.94	Holland v Saudi Arabia	Washington
25.06.94	Belgium v Holland	Orlando
25.06.94	Saudi Arabia v Morocco	NY
29.06.94	Morocco v Holland	Orlando
29.06.94	Belgium v Saudi Arabia	Washington

the COACH

THE MANAGER

Paul VAN HIMST. Aged 50 (born October 2, 1943). Belgium's greatest player, he took over as national manager in 1991 in succession to Guy Thys. In the 1960s and early 1970s, as a player with Anderlecht, Van Himst won all the domestic honours, and was voted Footballer of the Year four times — the first occasion when he was still only 16. Van Himst scored a record-equalling 30 goals in 81 internationals. Later he became coach of Anderlecht, guiding them to league, Cup and UEFA Cup success (in 1983).

the SQUAD

THE SQUAD

Michel PREUD'HOMME. Goalkeeper. Aged 35 (born January 24, 1959) with 48 caps. Mechelen. Footballer of the Year in 1987 and 1989. Began with Standard Liege, made his national debut in a 0-0 draw against Austria in May, 1979, but missed the 1984 European Championship and 1986 World Cup after his involvement in a match-fixing scandal. He and Bodart, his brother-in-law, hail from Ougree.

Gilbert BODART. Goalkeeper. Aged 31 (born September 2, 1962) with five caps. Standard Liege. Bodart began with the local CS Verlaine club. Made his Belgium debut in a 2-0 win over Bulgaria in April, 1986.

Philippe ALBERT. Central defender. Aged 26 (born August 10, 1967) with 27 caps (three goals). Anderlecht. Played previously for Standard Liege, Charleroi and Mechelen and joined Anderlecht two years ago. Albert made his debut against Northern Ireland in 1987. 1992 Footballer of the Year.

Rudi SMIDTS. Left-back. Aged 30 (born August 12, 1963) with nine caps (one goal). Antwerp. Late developer who made his Belgium debut away to Czechoslovakia in September 1992.

Georges GRUN. Defender. Aged 32 (born January 25, 1962) with 67 caps (three goals). Parma (Italy). Highly versatile. Began with Anderlecht and made his debut in the 2-0 win over Yugoslavia in the 1984 European Championship finals. Grun missed much of this season because of injury.

Vital BORKELMANS. Central defender. Aged 30 (born June 1, 1963) with nine caps. Club Brugge. Played previously for Patro Eisden and Waregem and made his Belgium debut in a 3-0 win over Denmark in 1989.

Franky VAN DER ELST. Defender or midfield. Aged 32 (born April 30, 1961) with 59 caps. Brugge. Former Footballer of the Year. Made his name with RWD Molenbeek and moved to Brugge in 1984.

Lorenzo STAELENS. Midfield. Aged 29 (born April 30, 1964) with 16 caps (one goal). Club Brugge. Made his international debut in a 2-2 home draw against Romania in May 1990 when he was then a surprising choice for the World Cup squad.

Bruno VERSAVEL. Midfield. Aged 26 (born August 27, 1967) with 32 caps (three goals). Anderlecht. Joined Anderlecht in 1991 for a domestic record £1.8million from Mechelen. Previously played for Beveren, moving to Mechelen in 1988, the same year he made his Belgium debut against Brazil.

Danny BOFFIN. Midfield. Aged 28 (born July 10, 1965) with 16 caps. Anderlecht. Played previously for St Truiden and for FC Liege — from whom Anderlecht signed him three years ago. Boffin made his debut in a 3-0 win over Denmark in August, 1989.

Enzo SCIFO. Midfield. Aged 28 (born February 19, 1966) with 62 caps (15 goals). Monaco (France). Of Italian parents, joined Anderlecht as a teenager from La Louviere, starred at the 1984 European finals then moved to Italy with Inter. He was far too inexperienced and was sent out on loan to Bordeaux and Auxerre. In 1991 he was sold to Torino, whose financial crisis enforced his summer sale to Monaco.

Marc EMMERS. Midfield. Aged 27 (born February 25, 1966) with 30 caps (two goals). Anderlecht. Can play an attacking role in midfield or in defence and is renowned for a dangerous long-range shot. Member of the Mechelen side who surprised Ajax in the 1988 Cup-winners Cup Final.

Marc DE GRIJSE. Striker. Aged 28 (born September 4, 1965) with 45 caps (13 goals). Anderlecht. 1988 Players' Player of the Season. Started his career with Antwerp, moving on to Brugge and then to Anderlecht for a domestic record £1.5million in 1989. Scored 50 goals in the next four years. Made his international debut against Argentina in 1984.

Marc WILMOTS. Forward. Aged 24 (born February 22, 1969) with 20 caps (eight goals). Standard Liege. Experienced, dangerous attacker who was 22-goal top scorer last season for Standard. Formerly with Mechelen.

Josip WEBER. Forward. Aged 29 (born November 16, 1964) with no caps. Cercle Bruges. Weber, Croat-born but who never played for Yugoslavia, is currently applying for Belgian citizenship and hopes to play for his new country in the World Cup finals. Weber joined Cercle in 1988 from Dinamo Vinkovici and has been top scorer in Belgium for the past two seasons.

Luc NILIS. Attack. Aged 26 (born May 25, 1967) with 22 caps. Anderlecht. Amazingly Nilis, with more than 100 goals in the last six years, has yet to score a goal for his country. Former youth, Under-21 and Olympic international was controversially omitted from the 1990 World Cup squad.

Airton Luis OLIVEIRA Barroso. Forward. Aged 24 (born March 24, 1969) with seven caps (1 goal). Cagliari (Italy). Brazilian-born, signed on trial from Sociedade Esportiva de Tupan in 1985 at 16. Took Belgian nationality and scored on his Belgium debut in a 2-1 defeat by Tunisia in 1992. That summer Anderlecht sold Oliveira to Cagliari for £2million.

BOLIVIA

The graduates

Tahuichi kids come of age

BY PAUL GARDNER

WHO would have thought it? Bolivia, the weakest of the South American countries (except for baseball-dominated Venezuela) beating Uruguay for a place in the World Cup finals?

Bolivia, with a population of only 7.8 million, 300 soccer clubs and 20,000 registered players. Bolivia, with only one international title to their credit — the South American championship of 1963, when they hosted the event — are now among the world's soccer elite.

But it should not have been a surprise. The Bolivians have been knocking on the door of world soccer for some years now. They went close to qualifying for Italia '90, losing out only on goal difference to Uruguay.

In the 1993 Copa America (South American Championship) they failed to qualify for the second round — but the other teams in their group were Argentina, Mexico and Colombia, which finished first, second and third in the tournament.

The Bolivians drew with Mexico and Colombia, and lost 1-0 to Argentina; their play impressed neutral observers. By the time the World Cup qualifying rounds started later that year, the Bolivians were ready.

Venezuela were swamped 7-1 in the opening game, then came the historic 2-0 victory over Brazil, and an emphatic 3-1 defeat of Uruguay. Altitude was undoubtedly an important factor in the wins. Bolivia played their home games in La Paz, over five miles above sea level.

But Bolivia had always played there, and had never had results like this.

There were new influences at work. Since 1980, the Tahuichi Youth Academy of Santa Cruz had been building up a worldwide reputation for turning out skillful players. Now there were six of the school's graduates on the national team.

In Guido Loayza, the Federation had a new, progressive-minded president determined that Bolivia would qualify for the 1994 World Cup.

Loayza hired a new coach in early 1992, the Spaniard Xavier Azkargorta, El Bigodon, the man with the big moustache. In Bolivia, Azkargorta quickly realised that the players were as skilled as any in South America, but they lacked self-confidence. "They took the field already losing 1-0," he

Leading . . . Bolivia's top striker Marco Antonio Etcheverry.

Pleading . . . defender Gustavo Quinteros in discussion with teammates (far right).

said. Azkargorta, a medical doctor, used some applied psychology: "Our opponents are human just like us," he told his team. "We shall not be beaten by a negative attitude."

The team's preparations were helped, rather than hindered, by the usual chaos in Bolivian football circles. In 1993, soon after Azkargorta arrived, an all-out strike by players demanding better salaries and conditions closed down the professional league.

Suddenly, Azkargorta had full-time access to the players he wanted.

Azkargorta's choices were not universally popular, and he was severely criticized after a 3-1 defeat by Chile just before the Copa America. "The papers headlines read 'You Blew It'," Azkargorta recalls, "and they said I knew less about football tactics than Mickey Mouse."

But Azkargorta persisted. He had his key players now, the 30-year-old veterans Milton Melgar and Carlos Borja, and the young ex-Tahuichis Marco Etcheverry and Erwin Sanchez.

"We don't have middle-aged players in the team," says Azkargorta, "they're either veterans or youngsters."

Says Melgar: "The important thing was the tactical discipline that Azkargorta insisted on.

"The average Bolivian footballer never learns this in all his career . . . and we had to master it in eight months!

"It meant that I and Juan Baldivieso, both of us normally playmakers, had to take on more defensive duties in midfield."

Borja is the tireless inspiration of the midfield, with Sanchez as the out-and-out playmaker. The ever-dangerous Etcheverry is the most attacking of the midfielders. Up front is the elusive William Ramallo, the only true forward. The "secret weapon" is another ex-Tahuichi, Luis Cristaldo. Nominally the left-back, Cristaldo has turned himself into a formidable attacking threat with his surging runs forward and powerful long-range shooting.

In goal, Azkargorta used Dario Rojas in the first game against Venezuela. But a bad error by Rojas allowed Venezuela to open the score, and even though Bolivia ran out 7-1 winners, Carlos Trucco has been in goal since that game.

Defenders Marco Sandy, Gustavo Quinteros and Miguel Rimba have proved a reliable trio -– though they had a nightmare in the 6-0 loss to Brazil.

'It should not have been a surprise . . . the Bolivians have been knocking on the door of world soccer for some years now'

Of that game, Azkargorta says simply "You can expect one bad game — this was ours."

Certainly the subsequent performance, in Montevideo against Uruguay, showed that Bolivia were no walk over. The team fought hard before going down 2-1 to two questionable goals — a result that led the Bolivian government to lodge a protest with FIFA about the refereeing (the protest was rejected).

The agony of those defeats was all wiped out on September 19 last year when a 1-1 tie with Ecuador ensured Bolivia's place in the final 24.

The country's appearance in the United States will not be their first in the World Cup.They played in the 1930 and 1950 final rounds: a total of three games, all lost, no goals scored, 16 conceded.

Pretty depressing, but there is every reason to believe that Azkargorta's team will do a lot better.

The one cloud on the horizon concerns Etcheverry, who had an operation in November 1993 after suffering severe knee ligament damage playing for his club Colo Colo in Chile. He is expected to resume training in March.

1994 WORLD CUP SCHEDULE

FIRST ROUND

GROUP C
GERMANY
BOLIVIA
SPAIN
SOUTH KOREA

17.06.94	Germany v Bolivia	Chicago
17.06.94	Spain v South Korea	Dallas
21.06.94	Germany v Spain	Chicago
23.06.94	South Korea v Bolivia	Boston
27.06.94	Bolivia v Spain	Chicago
27.06.94	Germany v South Korea	Dallas

HOW THEY QUALIFIED
SOUTH AMERICA
GROUP B

18.07.93	Ecuador v Brazil	0-0
18.07.93	Venezuela v **Bolivia**	1-7
25.07.93	**Bolivia** v Brazil	2-0
25.07.93	Venezuela v Uruguay	0-1
01.08.93	Uruguay v Ecuador	0-0
01.08.93	Venezuela v Brazil	1-5
08.08.93	**Bolivia** v Uruguay	3-1
08.08.93	Ecuador v Venezuela	5-0
15.08.93	**Bolivia** v Ecuador	1-0
15.08.93	Uruguay v Brazil	1-1
22.08.93	**Bolivia** v Venezuela	7-0
22.08.93	Brazil v Ecuador	2-0
29.08.93	Brazil v **Bolivia**	6-0
29.08.93	Uruguay v Venezuela	4-0
05.09.93	Brazil v Venezuela	4-0
05.09.93	Ecuador v Uruguay	0-1
12.09.93	Uruguay v **Bolivia**	2-1
12.09.93	Venezuela v Ecuador	2-1
19.09.93	Brazil v Uruguay	2-0
19.09.93	Ecuador v **Bolivia**	1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BRAZIL	8	5	2	1	20	4	12
BOLIVIA	8	5	1	2	22	11	11
Uruguay	8	4	2	2	10	7	10
Ecuador	8	1	3	4	7	7	5
Venezuela	8	1	0	7	4	34	2

the COACH

Xavier AZKARGORTA. Born in Azpeita, in the Basque region of Spain, on September 29, 1953. Played for the youth teams of Real Sociedad and Athletic Bilbao, but a serious knee injury at age 20 finished his playing career. He then concentrated on his medical studies (he graduated as a doctor in 1985), and on coaching. Coached Espanol, Valladolid, Sevilla and Tenerife. In 1990 he decided to return to his medical career, opening a clinic of sports medicine in Barcelona. But in late 1992 he returned to football, accepting the job of coach to the Bolivian national team. Many in Bolivia, characterised him as an unknown who knew nothing about Bolivian football. He even received death threats, but his team's qualification for the US has turned him into a national hero in Bolivia.

the SQUAD

Carlos Leonel TRUCCO. Goalkeeper. Aged 35 (born August 11, 1957) with 10 caps. Bolivar. Argentinian-born veteran who moved to Bolivia in 1985. Spectacular but safe, as he showed with an extraordinary performance in the key qualifier against Ecuador. Has a nickname common among keepers — Loco.

Dario ROJAS. Goalkeeper. Aged 34 (born January 20, 1960) with 10 caps. Oriente Petrolero. Back-up keeper to Trucco.

Gustavo QUINTEROS. Defender. Aged 29 (born February 15, 1965) with 15 caps. The Strongest. Solid central defender, ever-present in the qualifiers.

Juan Manuel PENA. Defender. Aged 21 (born January 17, 1973) with 21 caps. Blooming. Tall, quick, young defender, fromthe Tahuichi Academy.

Miguel Angel RIMBA. Defender. Aged 26 (born November 1, 1967) with 20 caps. Bolivar. Versatile, speedy defender who was at the centre of a drug scare when he was suspended after testing positive for cocaine after the 2-0 win over Brazil. The cocaine was traced to Trimate, a tea product widely, and legally, used in Bolivia. Later reinstated, nicknamed The Roadrunner.

Roberto PEREZ. Defender. Aged 33 (born April 17, 1960) with with 14 caps. Oriente Petrolero. Experienced veteran who can fill in at full-back .

Luis CRISTALDO. Defender. Aged 24 (born August 31, 1969) with 16 caps (1 goal). Bolivar. Former Tahuichi Youth Academy player. Aggressive, attacking full-back, the revelation of the qualifiers.

Marco SANDY. Defender. Aged 22 (born August 29, 1971) with 15 caps (1 goal). Bolivar. Uncompromising central defender — hard tackler, strong in the air. Speedy and confident enough to occasionally move up on attack, scored a goal against Venezuela.

Modesto SORUCO. Defender. Aged 28 (born February 12, 1966) with 8 caps. Blooming. No-frills defender, used as a substitute for Miguel Rimba.

Erwin SANCHEZ. Midfielder. Aged 24 (born October 19, 1969) with 30 caps (8 goals). Boavista (Portugal). From the Tahuichi Youth Academy. Elegant, playmaking midfielder with great speed and goal-scoring ability. Moved to Portugal in 1990 to join Benfica, the first Bolivian to play in Europe. In his youth, his ability to score incredible goals, plus his habit of playing with his shirt out and his socks rolled down, earned him the nickname Platini.

Julio Cesar BALDIVIESO. Midfielder. Aged 22 (born December 2, 1971) with 20 caps. Bolivar. A product of the Enrique Happ soccer school . A tricky dribbler, and the playmaker for Bolivar, seen as the "next Etcheverry".

Carlos Fernando BORJA. Midfielder. Aged 36 (born December 25, 1957) with 33 caps. Bolivar. The oldest member of the team. Captain of Bolivar for many years, has played his entire career with the club. Midfield battler.

Ivan CASTILLO. Midfielder. Aged 23 (born July 11, 1970) with 4 caps. Bolivar. Younger brother of Ramiro. Dazzling speed, a good finisher and dribbler.

Ramiro CASTILLO. Midfielder. Aged 27 (born March 27, 1966) with 27 caps (2 goals). Platense (Argentina). Played for many years in Argentina with River Plate, Argentinos Juniors and Rosario Central. A series of injuries have hampered him recently.

Jose Milton MELGAR. Midfielder. Aged 34 (born September 20, 1959) with 52 caps (5 goals). The Strongest. The slight, almost skinny, Melgar is probably the most popular player in Bolivia. Played in Argentina with Boca Juniors and River Plate. The unquestioned team leader. Seems slow, but compensates with accurate passing.

Marco Antonio ETCHEVERRY. Attack. Aged 23 (born September 29, 1970) with 21 caps (5 goals). Colo Colo (Chile). Voted Bolivian Player of Year in 1993. Former Tahuichi player, turned professional with Bolivar, who loaned him to Albacete in Spain. After an unsuccessful year, he returned to Bolivar and the Bolivian national team. Left-footed playmaker and goalscorer, nicknamed El Diablo, The Devil. In 1993, sold to Colo Colo of Chile for £500,000.

Jaime MORENO. Attack. Aged 20 (born January 19, 1974) with 12 caps. Blooming. Another Tahuichi product. The youngest member of the squad, combines speed and strength with a delicate touch.

Alvaro PENA. Attack. Aged 29 (born February 11, 1965) with 24 caps (3 goals). Temuco (Chile). Nicknamed Canon for his powerful shot. Used mostly as a substitute for Ramallo in the qualifying games. Speed and ball-control make him a threat on breaks.

William RAMALLO. Attack. Aged 30 (born July 4, 1963) with 15 caps (1 goal). Destroyers. Product of the Enrique Happ soccer school. The team's top scorer with seven goals in the qualifiers, including the crucial goal against Ecuador that clinched Bolivia's place at US '94. Coaches the University team in Santa Cruz. Nicknamed The Phantom.

THE MEN WHO MATTER

THE *WORLD SOCCER* COUNTDOWN TO US '94 CONTINUES WITH PROFILES OF THREE VITAL MEN — AN OUTSTANDING SOUTH AMERICAN, AN OUTSTANDING EUROPEAN, AND A CONTROVERSIAL DUTCH COACH WORKING IN AFRICA.

CLEMENS **WESTERHOF**

FREDDY **RINCON**

Gently does it

BRITISH coaches who think that footballs were made to be punted upfield and chased by headless chickens could learn a lot from Colombian midfielder Fredy Rincon.

While British football has stagnated, the Colombian game has improved greatly, and Rincon has been instrumental in its emergence.

"We believe that the ball deserves to be treated well, with respect," he says. "When we play, we like to put on a show. Winning is a bonus."

His style, based on excellent technique, encompasses the Colombian way of playing. Rincon's tall and lanky build may at first sight give the impression of a clumsy player but that idea is quickly dispelled on seeing him with the ball at his feet.

Rincon has a deft touch and acceleration that can make opponents look as if they have been nailed to the pitch. He is an excellent finisher, too.

He has been one of the most important figures in Colombia's rise, with 11 goals in 41 full internationals, since his debut in 1988.

Rincon scored twice in the sensational 5-0 win over Argentina in Buenos Aires last September, and the last-minute equaliser in a 1-1 draw with West Germany at the 1990 World Cup.

An incisive Carlos Valderrama pass sent him homing in on Bodo Illigner and, he says, "I deliber-

PRO-FILE

FREDDY RINCON

PALMEIRAS & COLOMBIA

Born: August 14, 1966, in Buenaventura, Colombia

Previous clubs: Santa Fe, America Cali

International caps: 41 (11 goals)

Controversial Clemens

NIGERIA have reached the World Cup Finals for the first time, under controversial coach Clemens Westerhof. He acknowledges that he is not very well liked, but claims that his team will do well in the United States, even so.

Westerhof has been described as aggressive, selfish and stubborn. It has been said that he is "better at discipline then coaching, because he has little tactical knowledge".

During several years in his native Holland with MVV Maastricht, Vitesse Arnhem and Feyenoord, his greatest success was to take MVV to promotion from the Second Division.

There also are rumours that Westerhof has been perhaps too closely involved in transfers between some of his squad and clubs in other nations.

But for all the criticism, he has survived more than four years as coach in a one-party state with 140 million inhabitants.

You must be very clever, and a diplomat of some quality, to get your voice heard in such circumstances. Westerhof's start as coach with Nigeria was not very successful. In the decisive qualifier for Italia '90, against Cameroon, he led his team to what is described as perhaps the most difficult away ground in Africa — Reunion Stadium in Yaounde.

Nigeria needed only a draw too qualify, but lost 1-0. That's how Westerhof started his career in Nigeria — "Up against the wall."

Now, looking back on the qualification games for this year's tournament, he knows that the Nigerians shifted from brilliant to mediocre, but they qualified.

Looking at the players Westerhof can call on, his triumphs might not yet be over.

He says: "It has not been easy, but because I have had a plan from the start, a strategy made up for a period of five years, I have been carefully calculating in good time, and few things have really surprised me.

"I knew what I was doing. My head was clear and I was concentrating on my work. The rising movement of Nigerian soccer is exciting. Things have been developing the right way for the team and for me.

"My main problem is that most of the players are in Europe, playing in countries where styles are different. When we gathered before the World Cup qualifiers we had very little time to work together. Now we can work on, up to the time the World Cup takes off."

Westerhof would not comment on allegations that there is great envy from the home-based players towards those in Europe, but said: "We have an extremely rich well of talented players. The African Nations Cup in Tunisia in March will give me a very good opportunity to test my ideas in real competition.

"I will use those two weeks to sort out many questions which remain to be answered — such as which players are able to stand the strain of first-class opposition, and which players will show their talents and extend them when competition within the squad is really tightening up? This will be a most useful test for all of us."

My last question to Westerhof was: Will you prolong your contract after the World Cup? He replied: "I will decide after it's over."

STEFAN TARRAS

ately put the ball between his legs." The goal set off wild celebrations back home and sent the Colombian radio commentators, excitable at the best of times, to new heights of delirium. One screeched: "GOOOOOOLLLLLL" at least 18 times.

Yet Rincon's international career nearly ended in its infancy because of a natural shyness. "Playing for the national team was unnerving," he recalled.

"My problem was that I was very introverted, I hardly spoke to anyone and this reflected in my performances. But I managed to change my personality.

"I wanted desperately to play in the national team and if you want something, you have to pay for it."

Rincon, who has seven brothers and one sister, was born in 1966 in the Pacific coast town of Buenaventura, far removed from highland Colombia.

He began playing football seriously with a local club before moving to Bogota to begin his professional career with Santa Fe. After two years there, he was signed by America of Cali, and last month signed for Brazil's Palmeiras.

Rincon says there are three big items in his life — football, his family, and being Colombian.

Much of the money he has made has been given to his family.

"Football is everything for me, it has given me a better lifestyle and peace of mind."

He also believes the game can be used as a way of improving Colombia's battered image abroad.

As he points out, Colombia is one of the most prosperous countries in Latin America.

"Being Colombian means an awful lot to me," he says.

"We have a mission to change our country's image through football. Every match we play is important in this respect."

Rincon is not the type to gloat, but mention of that remarkable 5-0 win in Buenos Aires brings a glint to his eye.

Colombians in general have long resented what they see as an Argentinian superiority complex and, try as he might to be diplomatic, Rincon can't help having a good-natured swipe at his South American rivals.

"They were talking a lot before the match," he says.

"They said that they had history and tradition in football, that we didn't, and that we weren't going to change that in one game.

"But we didn't get involved in any arguements. We just went out and did our thing on the pitch. We did it rather well, too."

BRIAN HOMEWOOD

GHEORGE **HAGI**

Something different

GHEORGE HAGI'S Brescia team-mates stepped out of the lift at their hotel, clean-shaven and immaculate in their tracksuits.

Then came their itinerant Romanian captain, ultra-casual, unshaven and in crumpled trousers. Different, as usual.

Hagi is now a veteran and will lead his country in the World Cup. But even at 18 he was different enough to be picked for the international team.

He was obviously different, a month before his 23rd birthday in 1987, when the son of ruthless dictator Ceaucescu forced his club Sportul Studentesc to "give" him to the army club Steaua Bucharest.

In nearly four seasons there the owner of one of the world's best left feet scored 76 goals in 97 League games. This attracted Real Madrid, who thought him different enough to splash out a then record fee for a Romanian, £1.8million.

In his first season everyone expected champions Real to carry on where they left off, but he disappointed fans and management alike, scoring only three goals.

His style became the apex of arguments between the coaching staff. None doubted his ability. The problem was, where would it be best used?

In his second season an improvement in consistency brought 14 goals. A fair return, but still not enough for Madrid to break Barcelona's title stranglehold.

Hagi was released in June 1992 and bought by northern Italian club, Brescia. Many eyebrows were raised, but Hagi knew he had made the right decision. It was the nearest thing to a move back to his roots.

Under Mirceau Lucescu, a former Romanian national coach, Hagi joined three fellow internationals — Dorin Mateut, Ioan Sabau and Florin Raducioiu.

"Brescia had just been promoted, and I love the place with its ancient city centre. I live right in the middle of it all," he said.

"All my friends were there and although Radu (Milan) and Dorin (Reggiana) have gone, there's still Ioan. I would be happy to finish my career here." Yet at the beginning of this season things again were starting to

look different. Brescia had been relegated and Hagi had not sighed a new contract.

"Fans thought I wanted to leave, but that's not true," he emphasised. "All I said was that I would prefer to be playing in Serie A because I didn't want to lose my place in the national team."

"Gica" will be 30-something in the US, leading Romania into their second World Cup in succession, and on the form they showed beating Wales, it may seem that his team have one of the easiest passages, against US, Switzerland and Colombia.

Hagi disagrees: "We are a strong side, have been preparing for these games for a long time, and merit a bit of respect. But all the teams have their own strengths and will be thinking they have a chance.

"It's a group which doesn't really have a favourite and who knows what will happen on the day?"

Going into the Wales game last November, Romania needed only a point and taking into consideration that travelling isn't their strongest point they set about the task positively, especially Hagi.

One minute he was strolling about on the wing, waiting for the ball to arrive, the next he was off like a greyhound. His goal appeared to be a fluke, but Hagi still was named as man of the match.

Romania changed managers in midstream when Anghel Iordanescu took over as coach after the 5-2 defeat by Czechoslovakia last June.

Hagi says: "He's a great man, who brought success to Steaua and is still young. We all have faith in him. As for me, I have been very lucky in that all of Brescia is behind me in the World Cup — as long as we don't meet Italy!"

DAVE TAYLOR

BRAZIL

The enemy within

Unity or bust for the Samba stars

BY BRIAN HOMEWOOD

BRAZIL'S most difficult opponents at the World Cup could well turn out to be . . . Brazil.

Everyone knows that the squad are perfectly capable of winning he competition and ending their 24-year wait for a fourth World Cup win. Their fate lies largely in their own hands.

If Romario can keep his mouth shut and concentrate on scoring goals; if Rai can shake off his lethargy and sparkle as he did with Sao Paulo; if manager Carlos Alberto Parreira can stop the players bickering among themselves; if FIFA president Joao Havelange can stop trying to pick the team and if CBF president Ricardo Teixeira can be bothered to sort out the question of prize money, Brazil will be 80 per cent of the way to World Cup victory.

Otherwise, Brazil could repeat the self-destruction performed at the 1990 World Cup. There, some players threatened to go home if they weren't picked for the first team, others spent time negotiating transfers to European clubs with their agents in the team hotel, Careca had as much say in team selection as manager Sebastiao Lazaroni and there was the customary rebellion over prize money.

So far, the omens are mixed.

On the plus side, Parreira knows what lies ahead.

On the negative side, Romario has again stirred things up with his recent attempt at picking the team. For Romario, the ideal Brazil team would have a three-man attack featuring himself, Bebeto and Palmeiras striker Edmundo. His verdict on Sao Paulo forward Muller — that he only plays well in club football — is hardly likely to improve team spirit.

Teixeira's promise that prize money will be sorted out in advance is another worry, given the inability of football directors to keep their word. Teixeira is no exception, as the long list of promises he has failed to fulfil since becoming CBF president will testify.

Finally, there is the Rai problem. An on-form Rai could be the player of the World Cup. An off-form Rai is nothing more than a passenger who misplaces passes and drifts around the pitch as if he were

Celebrity . . . bad behaviour has earned Barcelona striker Romario notoriety (above).

Celebrating . . . Luisinho and Elivelton after a goal against Germany in the US last year (left).

sleepwalking. Parreira persisted with him throughout 1993 despite consistently pallid displays but hinted not long ago that Mr. Patience may soon pack his bags and walk out. In case that happens, Parreira has already started looking at Bragantino's Alberto as the possible replacement.

Brazil need Rai because, strange though it may seem, a shortage of creative midfielders is their biggest weakness on the playing side. Parreira himself said: "Rai is an idol and we don't have any others. There is no other player like him."

Elsewhere, Parreira is spoiled for choice. Good strikers appear to come out of the walls in Brazil and apart from the obvious choices of Romario and Bebeto, Rivaldo (Mogi Mirim), Edmundo (Palmeiras), Muller (Sao Paulo), Dener (Vasco da Gama), Valdir (Vasco da Gama), Edilson (Palmeiras) and Palhinha (Sao Paulo) would all be welcome in any other national team.

Ditto for central defenders who include the two Ricardos, Mozer and Marcio Santos. Jorginho is the obvious right-back and Parreira feels that goalkeeper Taffarel's experience is too important for him to be discarded. This in spite of some shaky performances last year and some cat-like elasticity from Flamengo's Gilmar.

In fact, few alterations are likely from the World Cup qualifiers, when Brazil started erratically but finished in style against Uruguay.

Parreira, who tends to stick by players who have served him well even when they lose their form at club level, is emphatic that he will not use a sweeper and has always maintained that players will be given more freedom than they were in the rigid system used by Lazaroni.

"We cannot put Brazilian players in a strait-jacket" has become one of his favourite expressions.

'If Romario can keep his mouth shut . . . if Rai can shake off his lethargy . . . if manager Parreira can stop the players bickering . . . and if CBF president Teixeira can be bothered to sort out the prize money, Brazil will be 80 per cent of the way to World Cup victory'

Despite these remarks, Brazil's performances in the qualifying games were often too cautious for the liking of the press. And with so many top-drawer strikers at his disposal, pressure is growing on Parreira to use a three-man attack, something which he has so far refused to even contemplate doing.

Many also feel that Parreira goes over the top on the loyalty front, keeping faith with old warhorses such as Branco, who attains an astonishing ratio when it comes to blasting free-kicks into defensive walls, and Dunga. Some more adventurous choices — including Edilson, Edmundo and Rivaldo at least in the squad — would certainly earn him some brownie points with the Brazilian public.

But if Romario and Rai can perform their best, as much of Parreira's time will be spent keeping egos under control as in picking the team. He knows, more than anyone else, that only victory will satisfy the public, who grow more impatient with every World Cup that passes without a Brazilian triumph. If Brazil fail, Parreira will more than likely have to follow the examples of his predecessors Lazaroni and Tele Santana. Both went to work abroad after the team came home empty-handed.

HOW THEY QUALIFIED
SOUTH AMERICA
GROUP B

18.07.93	Ecuador v **Brazil**	0-0
18.07.93	Venezuela v Bolivia	1-7
25.07.93	Bolivia v **Brazil**	2-0
25.07.93	Venezuela v Uruguay	0-1
01.08.93	Uruguay v Ecuador	0-0
01.08.93	Venezuela v **Brazil**	1-5
08.08.93	Bolivia v Uruguay	3-1
08.08.93	Ecuador v Venezuela	5-0
15.08.93	Bolivia v Ecuador	1-0
15.08.93	Uruguay v **Brazil**	1-1
22.08.93	Bolivia v Venezuela	7-0
22.08.93	**Brazil** v Ecuador	2-0
29.08.93	**Brazil** v Bolivia	6-0
29.08.93	Uruguay v Venezuela	4-0
05.09.93	**Brazil** v Venezuela	4-0
05.09.93	Ecuador v Uruguay	0-1
12.09.93	Uruguay v Bolivia	2-1
12.09.93	Venezuela v Ecuador	2-1
19.09.93	**Brazil** v Uruguay	2-0
19.09.93	Ecuador v Bolivia	1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BRAZIL	8	5	2	1	20	4	12
BOLIVIA	8	5	1	2	22	11	11
Uruguay	8	4	2	2	10	7	10
Ecuador	8	1	3	4	7	7	5
Venezuela	8	1	0	7	4	34	2

1994 WORLD CUP SCHEDULE

FIRST ROUND

GROUP B

BRAZIL
RUSSIA
CAMEROON
SWEDEN

19.06.94	Cameroon v Sweden	LA
20.06.94	Brazil v Russia	SF
24.06.94	Brazil v Cameroon	SF
24.06.94	Sweden v Russia	Detroit
28.06.94	Russia v Cameroon	SF
28.06.94	Brazil v Sweden	Detroit

the *COACH*

Carlos Alberto PARREIRA. Aged 51 (born March 25, 1943). His first taste of international soccer was as the physical preparation manager for Brazil's victorious 1970 World Cup team. Subsequently he was head coach of Kuwait at the 1982 tournament and of the UAE in 1990. He also served a term as head coach of Saudi Arabia. He and the United States' Bora Milutonovic will be the only people to guide three different teams to the World Cup Finals. Coached Fluminense to the Rio championship in 1975 and then won the Brazilian title with Flu in 1984. He also guided unfashionable Bragantino to the Brazilian national title but his first spell as Brazil boss ended after a loss to Uruguay in the 1987 Copa America.

the *SQUAD*

Claudio Andre TAFFAREL. Goalkeeper. Aged 27 (born May 8, 1966) with 60 caps. Reggiana (Italy). Parreira's first choice despite being pushed out of Parma last year by an excess of foreign players and some shaky performances, including a bad error in the defeat by Bolivia.

Armelino Quagliato ZETTI. Goalkeeper. Aged 29 (born January 10, 1965) with 20 caps. Sao Paulo. Moved to Sao Paulo from Palmeiras in 1990 and has since won two Libertadores Cups, two World Club Cups, two Sao Paulo titles and a Brazilian championship.

Jorge Amorim Campos JORGINHO. Full-back. Aged 29 (born August 17, 1964) with 63 caps (5 goals). Bayern Munich (Germany). Has flourished since moving to Bayern Munich and Parreira regards him as the world's best right-back.

Claudio Ibrahim Vaz Leal BRANCO. Full-back. Aged 29 (born April 4, 1964) with 70 caps (8 goals). Fluminese. Experienced and much-travelled full-back who played in the 1990 World Cup. Has an extremely powerful left-foot shot.

RICARDO Roberto Barreto da ROCHA. Defender. Age 31 (born September 11, 1962) with 53 caps (4 goals). Vasco da Gama. Returned to Brazil this year from Real Madrid, joining Santos first then moving to Vasco at the start of this year.

RICARDO GOMES. Defender. Aged 30 (born December 13, 1964) with 59 caps (4 goals). Paris SG (France). Forms the heart of the Brazil defence with the other Ricardo. Implacable and more elegant though.

Carlos CESAR SAMPAIO Campos. Midfielder. Age 25 (born March 31, 1968) with 15 caps. Palmeiras. Another in the hard-tackling midfielder mould.

MAURO da SILVA. Midfielder. Age 26 (born January 12, 1968) with 35 caps. La Coruna (Spain). Joined La Coruna from Bragantino two years ago. A sturdy midfielder, strong in the tackle but lacking on the creative front.

CAFU (Marcos de Morais). Defender/Midfielder. Age 23 (born June 7, 1970) with 26 caps. Sao Paulo. Coach Tele Santana gave Perreira a headache when he shifted Cafu from right-back into midfield. Cafu is one of Brazil's most dynamic players and admits to preferring the position but Parreira insists he is a right-back.

LEONARDO Nascimento de Araujo. Full-back/ Midfielder. Age 24 (born September 5, 1969) with 20 caps. Sao Paulo. Another who returned to Brazil from Europe recently, when he joined Sao Paulo from Valencia. As with Cafu, Santana has moved him from full-back to midfield.

DUNGA (Carlos Caetano Verri). Midfielder. Age 30 (born October 31, 1963) with 46 caps (4 goals). Pescara. Determination personified, was brought back into the Brazil team during the qualifying matches after the humiliation in La Paz.

RAI de Souza Oliveira. Midfielder. Age 28 (born May 15, 1965) with 47 caps (12 goals). Paris SG (France). Left Sao Paulo for France last year. Brother of former Brazil international Socrates, possesses the same elegant style and ability to score goals but is prone to drift out of games.

MULLER Luis Antonio Correia da Costa. Forward. Age 28 (born January 31, 1966) with 61 caps (12 goals). Sao Paulo. Romario's remarks that Muller only shines at club level may have been undiplomatic but do have a certain ring of truth. Never shone at the 1990 World Cup finals, but his speed is a constant torment for defenders and his return to Brazil from Torino has rejuvenated his career.

EDMUNDO Alves de Souza. Forward. Age 22 (born April 2, 171) with 21 caps (2 goals). Palmeiras. The man Romario wants to play alongside is quick, dribbles brilliantly and scores stunning goals. But he frequently argues with team-mates and gets sent off. Promoted to Vasco's first team only two years ago and moved to Palmeiras 12 months later.

BEBETO (Jose Roberto Gama de Oliveria). Forward. Age 30 (born February 16, 1964) with 75 caps (27 goals). La Coruna (Spain). Flyweight and world class forward who used to be known as "cry-baby" but has matured beyond recognition in the last two years, since he left Vasco for Spain.

PALHINHA. Midfielder/Forward. Age 27 (born December 14, 1967) with 22 appearances (5 goals). Sao Paulo. Began with America of Belo Horizonte, and only appeared at the top level when Sao Paulo signed him on loan.

ROMARIO de Souza Faria. Forward. Age 28 (born January 29, 1966) with 46 caps (20 goals). Barcelona (Spain). Banned by Parreira in 1993 after trying to shout his way into the team against Germany. Recalled for the decisive qualifier against Uruguay and replied by scoring twice. Scores stunning goals, argues with team-mates and makes outspoken comments. Previous clubs — Vasco da Gama and PSV Eindhoven.

BULGARIA

Top shot . . . Krasimir Balakov (above, right) leads the celebrations after the World Cup qualifying victory over France in Sofia last September.

The greatest test

Does coach Penev have enough strength in reserve?

BY BOB VAUGHAN

SOFIA reacted modestly to Bulgaria's victory in Paris which secured — in fairly dramatic style — their sixth appearance in the World Cup finals.

In the cold light of day it has to be realised that Bulgaria have yet to win a match in any Finals. Six draws, including 0-0 with England in 1962 in Chile, and 1-1 with Italy in the Azteca Stadium in 1986, represent their best achievements in 16 matches.

Expectation, however, probably will be higher than ever before, as Dimitar Penev's team have plenty of fire-power in front, a world-class forward and goal-scorer in Hristo Stoichkov, aided by the highly-rated strikers Emil Kostadinov and Luboslav Penev, all of whom have experience with top Latin teams. A question mark, however, hangs over the midfield and defence, who had bad days in Stockholm and, particularly, in Vienna's Ernst Happel Stadium, where goalkeeper and captain Borislav Mikhailov looked fallible. He may have been carrying an injury and more than atoned in Paris, but playing with a mid-table French Division Two side is somewhat different from a World Cup.

Does Penev have sufficient strength in reserve to cover Ivanov and Yankov? At the back there will be the dour defending now expected of Bulgarian sides usually having to struggle, and much will depend on Stoichkov's being able to keep the ball at the other end to ease the pressure on the weaker element of the team.

Third place should not be beyond them in

Top shot . . . Hristo Stoichkov (left) has won three Spanish championships and a Champions Cup with Barcelona as well as collecting 41 caps for Bulgaria.

Group D though Penev's side start with Nigeria in Dallas — a somewhat unknown quantity. With this in mind the Bulgarian Football Union are negotiating for a mid-April friendly with an African national team, if possible away.

Argentina provide the final opposition in Group D, back in the heat of the Cotton Bowl, while Chicago's Soldier Field could be the scene of a real Balkan showdown against the Greeks. They last crossed swords in the autumn of 1989 in a World Cup qualifier, Bulgaria winning 4-0 in Varna, Greece 1-0 in Athens; five goals and one sending off.

Whether or not Penev will risk flying in the face of traditional cautious play and go for positive football with three men up front remains to be seen, but if he is too careful there will be no lack of criticism.

In Vienna it seems there was disagreement before the tie, over tactics, and the outcome was disastrous. Some of these problems should be solved in the course of the friendlies, though full details of the programme up to June still have to be made known.

One fixture confirmed is the away friendly in Spain on March 23, though not yet the venue. Two more internationals are planned in April and May and on May 25 Bulgaria will play in front of their home crowd, though the opposition is not yet known. They depart for the US on June 10.

A disadvantage Penev shares with other coaches is that his squad is composed of a mixture of home-based players, four of whom were in the starting line-up in Paris and have a relatively straightforward half season of domestic League and Cup football ahead of them.

As for the 11 abroad, the situation is quite different. They are competing in a high-pressure professional League and in Stoichkov's case not only is there Barcelona's domestic championship challenge but also a strenuous Champions League which his Catalan employers also expect to be won.

Not much less will be expected of Penev's nephew in Valencia, or of Balakov, Kostadinov or Yordanov in Portugal. Penev's other difficulty, shared with his Russian if not by his Romanian counterpart, is a lack of money to travel and see his 11 charges performing in the German, Portuguese, Spanish and Swiss leagues and the French Second Division, a vital task to keep a check on form.

'Expectations probably will be higher than ever before, as Dimitar Penev's team have plenty of fire-power in front of goal'

Organisation, not always a strong point in the past, also has to be looked at and the recent months have not been easy, with the Bulgarian Football Union still trying to put their National League, and clubs, on a commercially viable footing to a background of insufficient sponsorship and a lack of success in Europe — or rather the inability of any representative to reach the quarter-finals.

France and Bulgaria had met 18 times before November 1993. Each had won seven times, four games had been drawn but the Bulgars hadn't won in Paris in 61 years until that evening.

Why, after that, can the national team not reach at least the second round in the US? Los Angeles, New York or San Francisco are the next venues to aim for. Thereafter The Big Apple, Dallas or California beckon!

the COACH

Dimitar PENEV. Age 48 (born July 12, 1945) in Miravene. Penev began his playing career with Lokomotiv Sofia before moving, in 1964, to CSKA where he spent 13 seasons, winning 90 caps for Bulgaria as a central defender. He played in all nine of Bulgaria's group games in the 1966, 1970 and 1974 World Cup Finals before taking up his first coaching post with CSKA in 1978 prior to a two-season engagement in Kuwait. The mid 1980s saw Penev back at his old club in Sofia again. Under him CSKA went on to win the League title five times and the Bulgarian Cup five times. Was appointed national team manager in autumn 1990.

the SQUAD

Boris MIKHAILOV. Goalkeeper. Aged 32 (born February 12, 1962) with 69 caps. FC Mulhouse (France). A tall goalkeeper first capped 10 seasons ago when Bulgaria met Algeria in a friendly in Paris. Plays his club football in the French Second Division with the modest FC Mulhouse.

Dimitar POPOV. Goalkeeper. Aged 24 (born February 27, 1970) with one cap. Plovdiv. First reserve.

Peter HUBCHEV. Defender. Aged 30 (born February 26, 1964) with 14 caps. Levski Sofia. Played in both the qualifying matches against France but has been in and out of the team since 1985, when he made his debut against the Swiss. A regular for Levski since joining from Second Division Osam Lovech in 1989.

Trifon IVANOV. Defender. Aged 29 (born July 27, 1965) with 36 caps. Real Betis (Spain). Experienced marker in his second season in Spain after a lengthy career with CSKA. Made his international debut in 1988 against the former GDR as a substitute, and scored in a 1-1 draw.

Zanko ZVETANOV. Defender. Aged 24 (born January 6, 1970) with 14 caps. Levski Sofia. Left-sided defender who joined the champions in the summer from Etar Timovo, helping them to a first title in 1992.

Zapryan RAKOV. Defender. Aged 32 (born January 4, 1962) with 26 caps. Botev Plovdiv. Veteran defender who won his first cap back in 1988, against Egypt. Joined Botev from Trakia five years ago.

Krasimir BEZINSKI. Defender. Aged 33 (born June 29, 1961) with 18 caps. CSKA Sofia. Had European Cup-winners Cup experience with the Sofia club before spending three seasons in Portugal with Portimonense, relegated in his first season there. Had made his international debut almost a decade earlier, in River Plate. Now back with CSKA and a regular.

Ilian KIRIAKOV. Defender. Aged 26 (born August 4, 1967) with 35 caps. La Coruna (Spain). May be competing for the last place in the squad with veteran striker Sadakov. Kiriakov's chances of making the World Cup may not be helped by his move to La Coruna. Made his international debut as substitute on Bulgaria's 1988 Gulf tour. Kirikov was a star at Etar until leaving for Spain in 1993.

Zlatko YANKOV. Midfielder. Aged 27 (born August 7, 1966) with 25 caps. Real Valladolid (Spain). An important man in the centre of midfield, rarely missing from Penev's starting line-up. Entered international football against Sweden in September 1990 and played in the remaining seven Euro qualifiers.

Krasimir BALAKOV. Midfielder. Aged 28 (born March 29, 1966) with 30 caps. Sporting Lisbon (Portugal). Sporting's leading scorer whose goals are just as important for his national team. Made his league debut for his home town club, Etar. Injury hampered his progress but by 1990 he was able to transfer to Portugal.

Daniel BORIMOV. Midfielder. Aged 27 (born January 16, 1970) with 4 caps. Levski Sofia. Midfielder capped four times last year. Came from Second Division Bodin Vidin four seasons ago and has established himself in the Levski side. A successful 1993 led to his break in the national squad.

Nicolai TODOROV. Midfielder. Aged 29 (born September 26, 1964) with 12 caps. Levski Sofia. Reserve defensive midfielder. Eight minutes towards the end of the game against Austria in Sofia were his ration in 1993. Previously with Lokomotiv Sofia.

Nasko SIRAKOV. Midfielder. Aged 32 (born April 26, 1962) with 51 caps. Levski Sofia. Attacking midfielder who helped put Rangers out of Europe on his return from RC Lens via Levski, Espanol and Real Zaragoza. Has also had time to top a half-century of internationals since his debut against Algeria in Paris. Averages a goal every three games for Bulgaria.

Hristo STOICHKOV. Attack. Aged 28 (born February 8, 1966) with 41 caps. Barcelona (Spain). The star man, three times a championship winner with Barca, Bulgarian Sportsman of the Year and runner-up in the vote for European Footballer of the year in 1992. Joined Barca in 1990, having been joint winner of the European Golden Boot with 38 goals for CSKA. A volatile temperament does not always please referees or opponents but a trusty left foot continually captivates crowds.

Emil KOSTADINOV. Attack. Aged 26 (born August 12, 1967) with 30 caps. FC Porto (Portugal). Made the vital contributions to the victory in the deciding qualifying game in Paris with two goals. Kostadinov (26 in his three seasons with Porto), had not scored for Bulgaria since Helsinki in May 1992. Previously with CSKA.

Luboslav PENEV. Attack. Aged 27 (born August 31, 1966) with 38 caps. Valencia. Has been in Spain since 1989, when he left CSKA. Coach Penev's nephew scored twice against Austria in Sofia.

Ivailo YORDANOV. Attack. Aged 27 (born June 26, 1966) with 7 caps. Sporting Lisbon. In his second season in Portugal after moving from Lokomotiv Gorna Orahovitsa.

HOW THEY QUALIFIED EUROPE GROUP 6

14.05.92	Finland v **Bulgaria** 0-3
09.09.92	**Bulgaria** v France 2-0
09.09.92	Finland v Sweden 0-1
07.10.92	Sweden v **Bulgaria** 2-0
14.10.92	France v Austria 2-0
28.10.92	Austria v Israel 5-2
11.11.92	Israel v Sweden 1-3
14.11.92	France v Finland 2-1
02.12.92	Israel v **Bulgaria** 0-2
17.02.93	Israel v France 0-4
27.03.93	Austria v France 0-1
14.04.93	Austria v **Bulgaria** 3-1
28.04.93	France v Sweden 2-1
28.04.93	**Bulgaria** v Finland 2-0
12.05.93	**Bulgaria** v Israel 2-2
13.05.93	Finland v Austria 3-1
19.05.93	Sweden v Austria 1-0
02.06.93	Sweden v Israel 5-0
16.06.93	Finland v Israel 0-0
22.08.93	Sweden v France 1-1
25.08.93	Austria v Finland 3-0
08.09.93	Finland v France 0-2
08.09.93	**Bulgaria** v Sweden 1-1
13.10.93	France v Israel 2-3
13.10.93	**Bulgaria** v Austria 4-1
13.10.93	Sweden v Finland 3-2
27.10.93	Israel v Austria 1-1
10.11.93	Austria v Sweden 1-1
10.11.93	Israel v Finland 1-3
17.11.93	France v **Bulgaria** 1-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SWEDEN	10	6	3	1	19	8	15
BULGARIA	10	6	2	2	19	10	14
France	10	6	1	3	17	10	13
Austria	10	3	2	5	15	16	8
Finland	10	2	1	7	9	18	5
Israel	10	1	3	6	10	27	5

1994 WORLD CUP SCHEDULE
FIRST ROUND
GROUP D
ARGENTINA
GREECE
NIGERIA
BULGARIA

21.06.94	Argentina v Greece	Boston
21.06.94	Nigeria v Bulgaria	Dallas
25.06.94	Argentina v Nigeria	Boston
26.06.94	Bulgaria v Greece	Chicago
30.06.94	Greece v Nigeria	Boston
30.06.94	Argentina v Bulgaria	Dallas

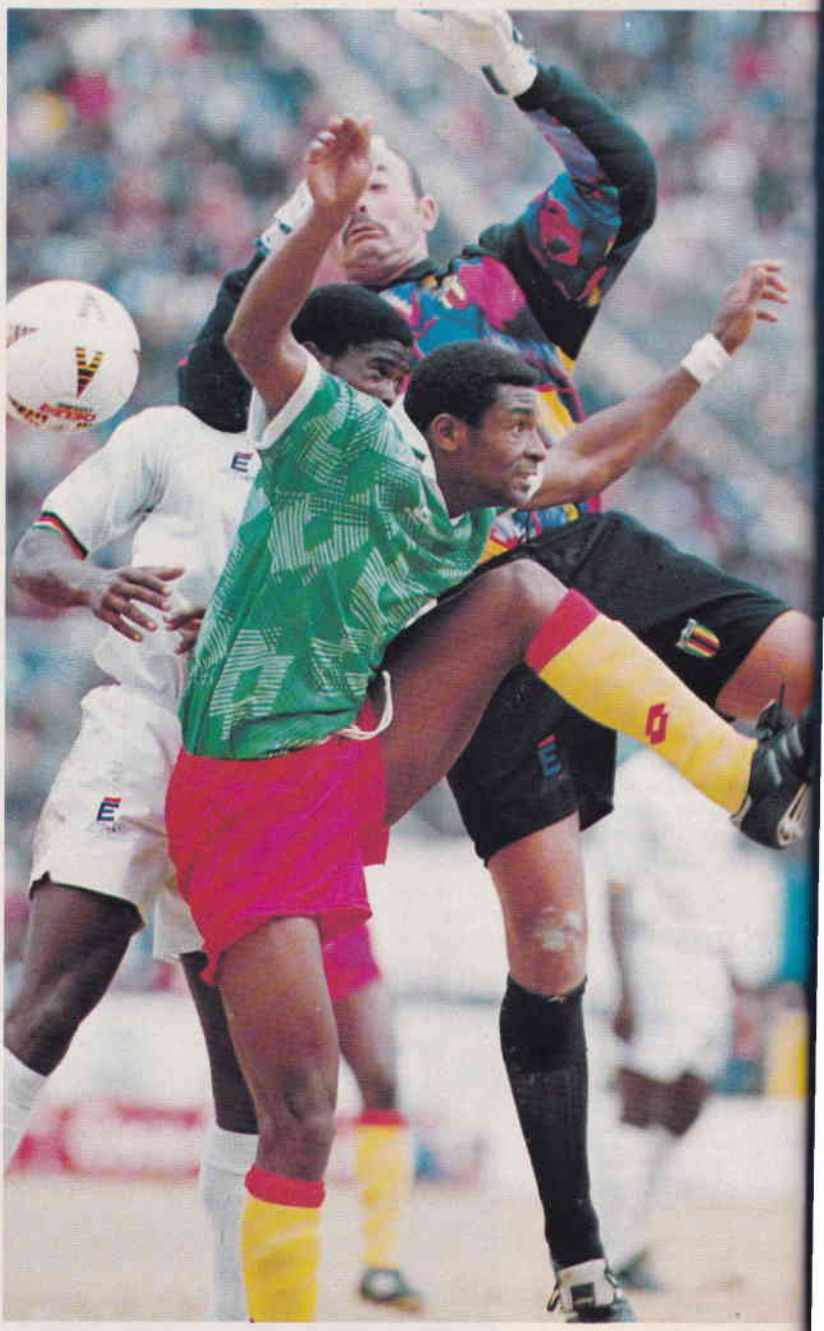
CAMEROON

Biyik's back

. . . but Biya's the boss

BY MARK GLEESON

Still going strong . . . skipper Stephen Tataw (right) has 54 caps and seems sure to add to his total at US '94.



Still going strong . . . Francois Omam-Biyik (far right) in action against Zimbabwe goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar.

THE Indomitable Lions of Cameroon remain one of the enigmas of world football, confounding all the standard norms and odds of the international game to stake their claim.

Without much official practice, players continually at odds with their bankrupt Federation and almost non-existent facilities, the economically-shattered central African country have qualified for a third World Cup finals tournament — a record for Africa which they share with fellow qualifiers Morocco.

Their appearance in the United States will be their second in succession, following

their stunning and highly unexpected quarter-final placing in Italy four years ago.

It was the best-ever showing by an African team at the World Cup finals and led directly to an increase from two to three of the number of African berths at the tournament.

But that came against all the odds, because Cameroon went into the tournament with a minimal amount of preparation, restricted to a handful of games against club sides in Yugoslavia; a Soviet coach who could not speak French or English, the two official languages of Cameroon, and the direct interference of the country's president, Paul Biya, in the team selection.

'Without much official practice, players continually at odds with their bankrupt Federation, and almost non-existent facilities . . . they still qualified for a third World Cup tournament'

Biya had insisted that a place be found for Roger Milla — whose "super substitute" performances and four goals in 1990 were to make him a world superstar long after his career had officially ended.

That absurd tale could yet repeat itself four years later as the bumbling Cameroon continue to defy the norms — and Biya is again insisting that Milla, now 42, plays.

Cameroon have qualified without a recognised coach, having had the team selected ahead of vital qualifying matches by an 11-man committee, with a corrupt Federation and a crumbling stadium and with many of their top stars continually threatening to strike unless they are paid long-overdue wages.

Seemingly the side only appear to thrive in adverse circumstances. They have failed to qualify for the African Nations Cup in Tunisia and have set no official programme of preparation despite the appointment of former French manager Henri Michel as coach.

Cameroon will bring many familiar faces back to the tournament. Francois Omam-Biyik, who scored the opening goal in the 1990 World Cup finals, is back as the spearhead of their attack along with two new faces, Alphonse Tchami and David Embe.

Omam-Biyik got two further vital goals in Cameroon's 3-1 defeat of Zimbabwe last October, which secured their berth in the United States.

Tchami plays in Denmark and Embe for Belenenses in Portugal.

Most of the Cameroonian squad will again be drawn from the professional leagues in Europe. Goalkeeper Joseph-Antoine Bell, on the books of St Etienne, tough-tackling midfielder Jean-Claude Pagal, also in France with Martigues, and Andre Kana-Biyik, back from a long-term injury with Le Havre, will all again be among the regular campaigners.

Coach Michel will have no shortage of talented material to work with, but will have to stumble over a lot of bureaucratic hurdles.

Milla will upstage everybody if he is included in the final squad. He has started training again with an eye on the final tournament. It could be his third appearance, for he was also in the team who finished undefeated in Spain in 1992 but were eliminated after the first round on an inferior scoring record.

Having Brazil, Russia and Sweden in the group, however, makes it almost impossible for the Lions to repeat their feats of Italia '90.

HOW THEY QUALIFIED

AFRICA
First Round
GROUP B

18.10.92	**Cameroon** v Swaziland	5-0
25.10.92	Swaziland v Zaire	1-0
10.01.93	Zaire v **Cameroon**	1-2
17.01.93	Swaziland v **Cameroon**	0-0
29.02.93	**Cameroon** v Zaire	0-0

★ *Liberia withdrew.*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CAMEROON	4	2	2	0	7	1	6
Swaziland	3	1	1	1	1	5	3
Zaire	3	0	1	2	1	3	1

Not played: *Zaire v Swaziland*

Second Round
GROUP C

18.04.93	**Cameroon** v Guinea	3-1
02.05.93	Guinea v Zimbabwe	3-0
04.07.93	Zimbabwe v **Cameroon**	1-0
18.07.93	Guinea v **Cameroon**	0-1
26.09.93	Zimbabwe v Guinea	1-0
10.10.93	**Cameroon** v Zimbabwe	3-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CAMEROON	4	3	0	1	7	3	6
Zimbabwe	4	2	0	2	3	6	4
Guinea	4	1	0	3	4	5	2

1994 WORLD CUP SCHEDULE

FIRST ROUND

GROUP B
BRAZIL
RUSSIA
CAMEROON
SWEDEN

19.06.94	Cameroon v Sweden	LA
20.06.94	Brazil v Russia	SF
24.06.94	Brazil v Cameroon	SF
24.06.94	Sweden v Russia	Detroit
28.06.94	Russia v Cameroon	SF
28.06.94	Brazil v Sweden	Detroit

the *COACH*

Henri MICHEL. Aged 46 (born October 28, 1947). Former manager of France, fired in 1987 and replaced by Michel Platini. Was coach of his country at the 1986 World Cup finals in Mexico. Led the French team to gold at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Was captain of France and played 58 times. Spent his entire club career at Nantes.

the *SQUAD*

Joseph-Antoine BELL. Goalkeeper. Aged 39 (born October 8, 1954) with 66 caps. St Etienne (France). Outspoken veteran who is also occasional captain of the team. His run-in with manger Valeri Nepomniachi cost him a chance to play in the 1990 World Cup finals. But this time round should be an automatic first-choice.

Jacques SONGO'O. Goalkeeper. Aged 30 (born March 17, 1964) with five caps. Metz (France). Was also in the World Cup squad in Italy but second choice behind Thomas Nkono. Last played for Cameroon in an African Nations Cup qualifier against Benin in August 1992. Has recovered brilliantly from a broken leg to earn high praise.

Victor NDIP-AKEM. Defender. Aged 26 (born August 20, 1967) with 41 caps. Olympic Mvolye. Tough full-back who had four outings at the last World Cup finals in Italy missing only the quarter-final. Lost his place after the World Cup qualifier against Guinea in Conakry.

Bertin EBWELLE. Defender. Aged 31 (born September 11, 1962) with 38 caps. Olympic Mvolye. Injured for more than a year and there will be some doubt over his ability to travel to the country, leaving a big gap in Cameroon's defensive plans.

Jean-Claude PAGAL. Defender. Aged 29 (born September 15, 1964) with 42 caps. Martigues (France). Tempestous player, currently suspended by his club for insulting supporters. Tough tackling and with a will to win that sometimes borders on the obsessive. Played in the 1990 World Cup finals.

Stephen TATAW. Defender. Aged 30 (born March 31, 1963) with 54 caps. Olympic Mvolye. Veteran captain who is making another comeback. Dropped in South Africa in 1992, but returned to play five matches in the World Cup qualifying campaign.

Alphonse YOMBE. Defender. Aged 24 (born June 30, 1969) with 17 caps. Olympic Mvolye. Reserve defender who was a squad member at the World Cup finals in Italy and the Nations Cup finals in Senegal, but did not play in either. Fills in for Bertin Ebwelle.

David EMBE. Midfielder. Aged 20 (born November 13, 1973) with two caps. Belenenses (Portugal). Scored on his debut in the Portuguese First Division just before Christmas. Previously on the books of Rennes in France.

Jacob EWANE. Midfielder. Aged 27 (born February 11, 1967) with 15 caps. Excelsior Mouscron (Belgium). Goalscoring midfielder who was a squad member at the 1992 African Nations Cup finals in Senegal. Forced his way into the team after emerging as the best player on the 1992 tour to South Africa.

Andre KANA-BIYIK. Midfielder. Aged 28 (born September 1, 1965) with 59 caps. Le Havre (France). Making a slow return from injury. Played just one match in the World Cup qualifiers when Cameroon beat Guinea 3-1 in Yaounde.

Cyrille MAKANAKY. Midfielder. Aged 28 (born June 28, 1965) with 29 caps. Maccabi Tel Aviv (Israel). Last played in the African Nations Cup finals in Senegal but returned to the squad for the World Cup decider against Zimbabwe. Had financial problems in Spain when is club folded but now back to fitness in the Middle East.

Emile MBOUH-MBOUH. Midfielder. Aged 27 (born May 30, 1966) with 55 caps. (Nadi Qatar, Qatar). Another star from the 1990 World Cup finals who returned to the team for the final two World Cup qualifiers after an absence of almost two years.

Guy-Noel TAPOKO. Midfielder. Aged 25 (born December 225, 1968) with 13 caps. Laval (France). A regular in the French Second Division but has made only intermittent outings for Cameroon since 1992.

Ernest EBONGUE. Attack 31 (born May 15, 1962) with 17 caps. Nadi Al Ahly (Qatar). Another veteran back in time for an outing at the World Cup finals. Dropped after a disappointing African Nations Cup in Senegal, but returned to play three World Cup qualifiers.

Kessang MABOANG. Attack. Aged 25 (born November 27, 1968) with 16 caps. Rio Ave (Portugal). Scored the final goal in the 3-1 win over Zimbabwe last October. Before that, had not played for the team for 18 months.

Joseph MBARGA. Attack. Aged 22 with 10 caps. Olympic Mvolye. Stand-in striker when the European-based stars have been unable to travel.

Richard NYOK-YANGA. Attack. Aged 25 (born October 17, 1968) with two caps. Charleville (France) French-born with a Cameroonian father, he won his first cap in the World Cup qualifying win over Guinea in Yaounde.

Francois OMAM-BIYIK. Attack. Aged 27 (born May 21, 1966) with 66 caps. Lens (France). Scorer of the opening goal of the 1990 World Cup finals and the only one of the game against Argentina. Also responsible for two early, and vital, goals that clinched qualification over Zimbabwe for the 1994 finals. Inconsistent at club level.

Alphonse TCHAMI. Attack. Aged 23 (born February 14, 1971) with seven caps. OB Odense (Denmark). Scored on his debut in the World Cup qualifier against Swaziland and has netted two more since. Exciting find who had to go overseas before receiving domestic recognition.

BROOKING talkback

BBC Radio and TV commentator TREVOR BROOKING, the former England midfielder, answers your letters. . .

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PLAY-OFFS PLEASE

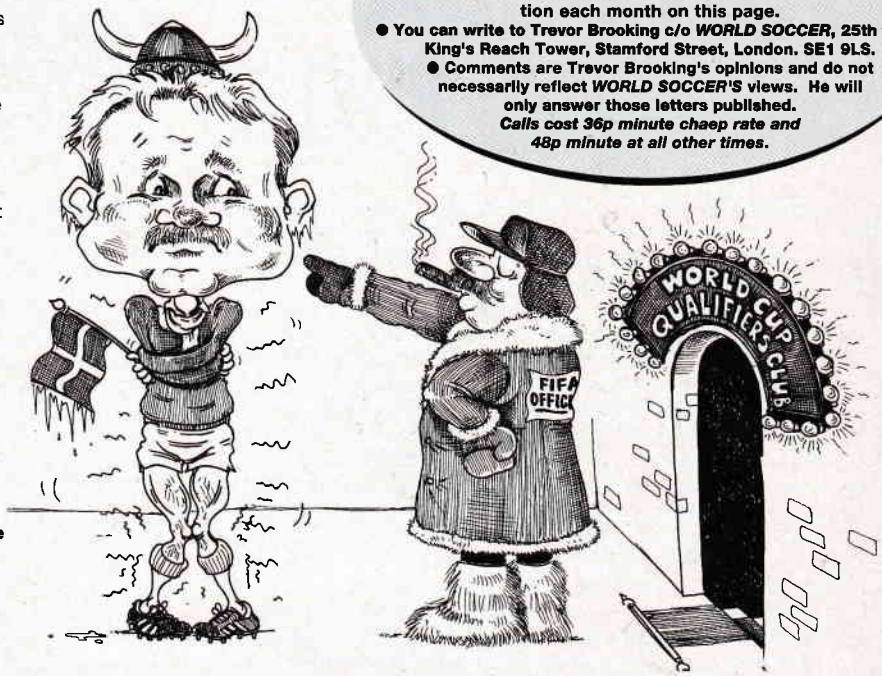
TREVOR — I feel that the sport's governing bodies ought to take into consideration something which to me and many others seems patently unfair: the deciding of World Cup qualifying places on a country's goal tally.

Take the case of Denmark. Having trekked around Europe on one of the most arduous routes towards qualification, they were finally denied not because they had fewer points than their opponents, nor because their goal difference was worse, but because they had scored fewer goals.

One might say that FIFA's policy is geared to produce more attacking football, but any number of circumstances can restrict the amount of goals a team is able to score — the weather for example. Denmark played their away games against Latvia and Lithuania with deep Baltic winter approaching, drawing 0-0 twice. The Republic of Ireland played theirs in spring, winning both. I don't begrudge the Irish their qualification, but my heart goes out to Denmark, victims of an insufficient system. In Italy issues like promotion and relegation are not decided on goal difference — instead, a play-off is arranged. Surely a similar system is desirable for an event as important this.

— MICHAEL GALVAN, Canterbury, Kent.

● I'm not convinced a play-off situation is any better than what's in place now. First of all there would be the huge problem of arranging the game. Would it be over two legs, or in a neutral venue? At the start of the qualifying period each country knows exactly what is required, and in the end the greater number of goals scored is at least a positive solution. The only other possible alternative to your play-off suggestion, is to take the aggregate scores of the two games.



OFFICIAL COMPLAINT

TREVOR — I am still on a high this morning after getting my weekly TV "fix" of English Football last night — I could not have asked for two more exciting games than the Manchester United/Blackburn Rovers and Sheffield Wednesday/Everton encounters. I am not a fan of any of the above teams, but rather of English football as a whole.

But, as coach of a local coach of a local Under-19 club team I find a certain trend in the English game very disturbing.

Both the above games were tarnished by inept refereeing — including the recently FIFA-listed gentleman who handled the Old Trafford game! The cautions handed out to Alan Shearer and David Batty were as a direct result of the referee not stamping out the "niggling" early in the first half.

It would also appear that English referees are allowing increasing levels of dissent from players. Surely the Laws of the Game should be upheld by the custodians.

Every time I see Paul Ince, brilliant footballer though he is, I am stunned to see how far over the line of acceptable conduct he is allowed to go.

I realise that the men in black or green cannot be pedantic about the situation, but something needs to be done to prevent the English game from degenerating into the quagmire of the Latin American and Southern European soap operas to which we are subjected from time to time.

I am also aware, as a registered referee myself, that interpretation and consistency are difficult to standardise and that a certain amount of leeway should be given to the man in the middle. New laws to control player behaviour are not the answer — how can we expect referees to implement new measures when they don't have the stomach to enforce the laws already at their disposal.

— SEAN MALHERBE, Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

● I APPRECIATE your concern although certainly the Manchester United v Blackburn match was always going to be a high-charged affair because of their league positions at the top of the Premiership. Both your points are valid, but have been so for many seasons, and I'm sure will continue to be so. The debate about refereeing will never cease because it's impossible to create the same consistency of interpretation in every match. The clamping down of "niggly" early tackles should be automatic, because only then will attacking players be allowed to develop their skills. Dissent from players is allowed far too much scope by certain referees. Huge television *exposure nowadays does not leave much to the imagination when showing a close-up verbal exchange between players, and this is not the ideal example to any impressionable youngster watching.*

WORLDWIDE CUP?

TREVOR — In my view the World Club Cup is not worthy of the title because it is contested by only two continents — South America and Europe.

I suggest the following tournament to decide who is the best club in the world:

1. A six-club championship to be played yearly.

2. Competing clubs — the Champions of Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, North America, and South America.

3. The tournament to last over one week and all games played in one city. (in December if possible).

4. A different continent could host the championship every year.

5. Tournament called WORLD CHAMPIONS CUP.

6. Playing formula: two groups of three. All clubs get two matches, winners meet in final.

— MICHAEL MONTAGUE, Kilcock, Republic of Ireland.

● YOUR suggestion is quite understandable, but I fear the ever-increasing demands on the top footballers would not be enhanced by another money-making tournament of this type. The 1996 European Championship draw involved a significant expansion to 47 countries this time, and with the new formula for the Champions Cup next season, I cannot visualise there being room for more fixtures. Qualification for the 1998 World Cup is another future headache for FIFA as yet more new countries apply for entry. The release of players for international duty could become an even bigger problem as the fixture list expands.

A GREAT BRITAIN XI

TREVOR — Do you not realise that it is people such as you who are sending the game in this country downhill?

In his letter of last month, James McFadden from the US echoed my long-time held view that we should only have one representative team under the banner of Great Britain. You said that you would oppose such a move on the grounds that "it would diminish our game even further".

Trevor, you and your like must wake up before it is too late. We must take drastic action to improve the quality of our football or else other countries will view us in the same light as we used to view Norway and Switzerland about 10-15 years ago.

Italy, Brazil, and now World Champions Germany only have on representative side at international level, and the last time I looked it did not seem to be diminishing their game.

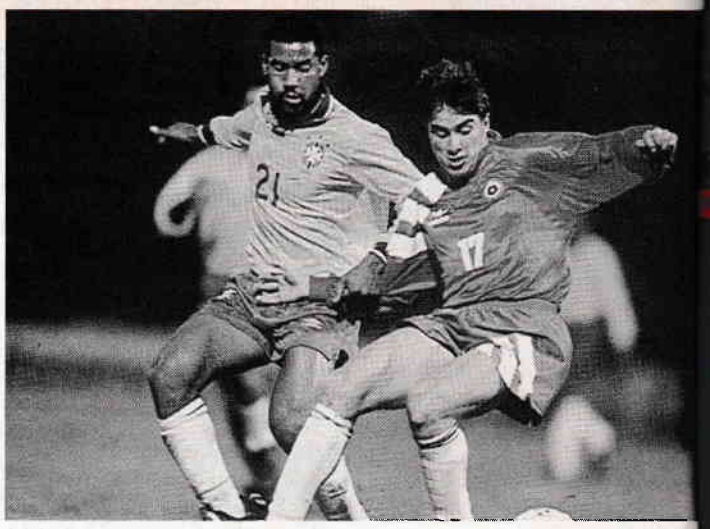
We are a very small nation and yet we choose, because of deep-seated political motives, to divide our vast talents in to four poor/mediocre teams. What a waste.

The sooner we wake up to the fact that together, as one national team, we would have a great chance to lead the world both in results and entertainment.

— FRANK DAVIES, Sheffield.

● I DON'T alter my previous comments regarding my belief that the home nations should definitely remain separate sides. Our game has deteriorated otherwise we would not be watching this summer's World Cup without any of those four teams participating. But I don't believe the gulf is so severe, that it can't be rectified. A number of English sides are showing an emphasis on providing a little more entertainment this season. Creative midfield players, and an individual ability to go past defenders, are still thick on the ground, but the interest stimulated by hosing the European Championship in 1996, should act as a unique incentive for our "young pretenders" in the future.

COLOMBIA FIND RHYTHM



A 3-2 win over Brazil in the Copa America was a rare success in a bleak year for Chile.

FOR once the table of international games played by the 10 South American countries of CONMEBOL gives an accurate idea of their ranking because all 100 countries played a fair number of games and met each other on a regular basis in the 73 games played between them in 1993.

A total of 88 games were played by the 10 countries — 26 of them in the South American Championship, 34 in the World Cup and 28 friendlies (nine against European opposition), six against Central American countries and 13 among themselves.

Significant was the increasing integration with Central America. Apart from bringing Mexico (and the US) into the Copa America, there were also those six friendlies. But it's been a hectic year, especially because the Copa America in Ecuador and World Cup qualifiers — a total of 60 games — were squeezed into three months which meant that leading countries, notably Brazil and Uruguay, could not get the release of their foreign-based stars.

CONMEBOL officials have now said that when the bi-annual South American Championship clashes with a World Cup qualifying year in future, fixtures for the latter will be more spread out.

COLOMBIA have taken the plaudits again. The world stood up and took notice when they beat Argentina 5-0 in Buenos Aires in September — a result which almost put the losers out of the World Cup. But as far back as the 1991 Copa America Colombia's soccer was highly thought of and they were called the best team never to win a trophy. It was the same in last year's Copa when they faced Argentina twice and were clearly superior in two drawn games as Argentina struggled to retain the title.

Colombia were thought to lack punch and the physical commitment in attack but with potential goalscorers such as Adolfo Valencia, Fredy Rincon, Faustino Asprilla, Ivan Valenciano, Victor Aristizabal and others in reserve they were bound to click sooner or later.

ARGENTINA's 2-1 defeat away to Colombia in their first World Cup qualifying clash brought to an end their record 31-match unbeaten run, but Argentina had lost their momentum long before that, scoring only 19 goals in 17 games.

The return of Diego Maradona, at 33, was more symbolic than useful, but he did give the team a much-needed lift in the play-off against Australia.

BRAZIL drew 1-1 twice with Argentina during the year. During the South American Championship they would, no doubt, have had a better record — and finished above Argentina — if they had not fielded virtually a second team with most of their European-based stars absent.

BOLIVIA were the sensation of the year under a European coach, Spaniard Xavier Azkargorta, who had had little

River look good at break

THE Argentine national championship opening round had four leaders — River Plate, Lanus, Racing Club and Velez Sarsfield — with four games to go as it went into a two-month summer recess.

And only two points separated the top eight in one of the closest tournaments in years. River Plate are most peoples' favourites as they and Velez Sarsfield seem to have the easier remaining fixtures. A tie on points will be decided by goal difference which currently favours River Plate.

Joint leading scorers, on eight goals, are River Plate's Ramon Medina Bello (whose transfer to a Japanese club was being negotiated) and San Lorenzo's Eduardo Bennett, the first Honduran international to play in Argentina.

For Newell's Old Boys, Diego Maradona's team, those last four games will be crucial as they are third from bottom in the relegation averages table. The bottom two go down on average points obtained over the last three seasons. Maradona again missed the last two league games through injury but Jorge Castelli — a former referee who recently took over as coach — complained that their professional staff, if not rich in quality, certainly has quantity — 50 players, which is twice the amount he needs.

A coaching change at the recess saw former international midfielder Miguel Angel Brindisi return from successfully coaching Barcelona of Ecuador to take over at title chasing Independiente, where he replaced Pedro Marchetta who resigned.

The Argentine FA, pressured by the players' union, finally restricted the number of foreign players per club to five with no more than three on the field at any time. This affected only three clubs — Mandiyu who have eight, and Boca Juniors and Argentinos Juniors with seven each. Currently there are 52 foreign players in the national First Division in 17 of the 20 clubs, mostly Uruguayans (25) and Paraguayans (16).

Hot shot . . . River's Ramon Medina Bello.

PARAGUAY

GOVERNMENT intervention into the affairs of the Paraguayan FA, investigating financial and other irregularities, was lifted hours before FIFA's deadline threatening the FA with suspension. But the championship, suspended a month earlier with four of seven final-round matches still to play, was not restarted.

Instead First Division club presidents voted 2-1 in favour of declaring Olimpia champions . . . for the 33rd time.

Olimpia had gone through the season unbeaten in 26 games and were comfortable leaders in the final round when it was suspended. Cerro Porteno were declared vice-champions and will, according to rules, play Cerro Cora, the national tournament winners, for a place in the Libertadores Cup.

ECUADOR

EMELEC became 1993 First Division champions as the top three — all with title chances — won their respective games on the last day. This left Emelec one point ahead of joint-second Nacional and defending champions Barcelona.

But as Emelec were celebrating, their Argentinian coach, Salvador Capitano, who had been having disagreements with club officials since August, packed his bags. Emelec also lined up three Argentinian players — Marcelo Benitez, Marcelo Morales and league top-scorer Roberto Oste.

Barcelona beat Nacional 3-1 for the vice-championship and the second place in this year's Libertadores Cup with international striker Carlos Munoz scoring all three goals, but within three days he was killed in a car crash near Guayaquil. Munoz, 30, had been the season's second-highest scorer in spite of his two-month absence on national team duty.

PERU

NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD Waldir Saenz — the year's revelation in the Peruvian championship — scored his 32nd goal for Alianza Lima in the season's final match to set up a new league scoring record, beating the 31 scored by Valeriano Lopez for Sport Boys in 1950.

The goal was vital as it gave Alianza Lima a 1-1 draw in the vice-championship decider with Sporting Cristal, which they then won 6-5 on penalties to claim the second place in this year's Libertadores Cup with champions Universitario de Deportes.

BOLIVIA

THE Bolivian national league, which only began in September due to a players' strike and the national team's activity in the Copa America and World Cup, was due to continue into 1994.

At press time, the top three from two groups had qualified for a final round — Blooming, Oriente Petrolero, Bolivar, The Strongest, San Jose and Independiente Petrolero.

Oriente Petrolero's William Ramallo was due to move to Japan's Kawasaki at the end of the season.

ERIC WE

experience of coaching elsewhere. In the Copa America they were one goal short of the quarter-finals but then they qualified for the World Cup finals. They have their best team in years with outstanding players such as Erwin Sanchez, Marco Etcheverry, Carlos Borja and Milton Melgar together with William Ramallo, who was top scorer in the South American World Cup qualifiers with seven goals — which also makes him joint leading scorer in South America.

ECUADOR have, for the last few years, been South America's most improved team under Yugoslav coach Dusan Draskovic and they have been hard to beat, but sometimes with luck going against them, they have never been able to reach the highest level in competition. Their fourth place in last year's Copa America was their best ever in this competition, helped in part by the altitude and home advantage.

CHILE, ranked seventh behind Ecuador, played less than the others as they were barred from the World Cup. The South American Championship was therefore their big challenge. Chile played some good football which brought them a 3-2 win against Brazil, but didn't advance to the second stage which cost coach Arturo Salah his job. Colo Colo's successful Yugoslav coach, Mirko Jozic took over this year.

Internal problems at their FA and frequent changes of coach did not help **PARAGUAY** who had a poor year while **PERU**, in spite of looking good at times under another Yugsolav coach, Vladimir Popovic, were no better. And Venezuela, under yet another Yugoslav coach, Radomir Djukovic, looked promising with a young team in the South American Championship in draws with Uruguay and the United States, but they hit rock bottom again in the World Cup qualifiers in spite of one win — 2-1 against Ecuador — to finish with their usual bottom ranking.

ERIC WEIL

LEADING SCORERS IN 1993 SOUTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONALS

1 .....William **RAMALLO** (Bolivia).....7
.....Eduador **HURTADO** (Ecuador).....7
3.....Gabriel **BATISTUTA** (Argentina) 6
.....Adolfo **VALENCIA** (Colombia).....6
.....Fredy **RINCON** (Colombia) 6
6.....Marco **ECHEVERRY** (Bolivia).....5
.....Raul **AVILES** (Ecuador).....5
.....**PALINHA** (Brazil) 5
.....**BEBETO** (Brazil) 5
.....Erwin **SANCHEZ** (Bolivia) 5

INTERNATIONALS PLAYED BY SOUTH AMERICAN TEAMS IN 1993

		Home					Away					Total					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	%
Colombia	17	4	2	0	12	3	4	7	0	14	6	8	9	0	26	9	73
Argentina	17	2	3	1	5	8	5	5	1	14	9	7	8	2	19	17	65
Brazil	16	4	1	0	16	2	3	5	3	15	11	7	6	3	31	13	62
Bolivia	18	6	0	0	21	3	1	6	5	13	18	7	6	5	34	21	55
Uruguay	13	2	2	0	7	2	3	2	4	8	15	5	4	4	15	17	54
Ecuador	17	7	2	4	24	10	0	1	3	1	5	7	3	7	25	15	50
Chile	8	1	1	0	3	2	2	0	4	5	8	3	1	4	8	10	44
Paraguay	13	2	1	1	5	5	1	4	4	6	14	3	5	5	11	19	42
Peru	17	2	3	3	8	9	1	3	5	6	14	3	6	8	14	23	35
Venezuela	15	1	2	3	4	14	0	3	6	8	35	1	5	9	12	49	23

CENTRAL AMERICA

IN EL SALVADOR two league matches were suspended recently because one fan threw an object on to the field. In South America referees are reluctant to suspend matches for something like this which they call "a minor incident", unless the object hits them.

IN GUATEMALA Municipal remain unbeaten after 15 games at the top of the table, but more surprising is that newly-promoted Sacachispas also remained unbeaten for their first 13 games and are second, four points behind. Edwin Westphal, of champions Aurora, is top scorer with 14, followed by Julio Rodas (Municipal) with 11.

COLOMBIA

Junior's joy

ATLETICO JUNIOR, of Barranquilla, won one of the closest championships in years when Oswaldo McKenzie scored in the final minute to give them a 3-2 victory over America of Cali, the defending champions.

This left them level at the top of the four-team final round with Independiente of Medellin, but Junior had 1.5 bonus points as a result of placings in the season's two regular championships while Independiente had only one. With one match to go all four teams had been level on points, again only separated by bonus points.

Junior were the first club under a foreign coach — Uruguayan Julio Comesana — to win the title in 12 years. It was their third title and they had outstanding service from Colombian internationals Carlos Valderrama, Ivan Valenciano, Victor Pacheco and Alex Mendoza as well as Uruguayan Hector Mendez and Paraguayan Adriano Samaniego. Known as "Tiburones" (sharks), Junior had been given less chance than the other three finalists because of their seemingly suspect defence.

Miguel Guerrero scored his 34th goal in the last match against America to establish a new league record which had been held by Jorge Gallego with 33 goals for Deportivo Cali.

Independiente Medellin are the other team to qualify for this year's Libertadores Cup but America, out of the competition for the first time for several years, ended with an internal crisis. Although their star-studded line-up ended only two points behind the champions, with everything depending on that last match which they lost in the final minute, there was talk of a general clear-out of players while they bought Henry Zambrano, one of the revelations of the season, from Independiente Medellin.

TABLES

ARGENTINA
National A Division — *opening tournament*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
River Plate	15	8	3	4	21	11	19
Lanus	15	5	9	1	20	12	19
Racing Club	15	7	5	3	17	10	19
Velez Sarsfield	15	7	5	3	15	10	19
San Lorenzo	15	7	4	4	21	16	18
Independiente	15	6	5	4	21	15	17
Gimasia	15	5	7	3	15	9	17
Banfield	15	6	5	4	16	12	17
Argentinos Jun	15	4	8	3	18	13	16
Boca Juniors	15	6	4	5	13	9	16
FO Oeste	15	4	7	4	12	15	15
Platense	15	3	8	4	15	17	14
Belgrano	15	4	6	5	14	23	14
Dep Mandiyu	15	4	5	6	20	18	13
Huracan	15	4	5	6	16	18	13
Rosario Central	15	2	8	5	14	22	12
Newell's OB	15	2	7	6	13	21	11
Gimnasio y Tiro	15	3	5	7	13	23	11
Estudiantes	15	2	6	7	11	18	10
Dep.Espanol	15	2	6	7	5	18	10

Lowest relegation averages (average points obtained over last three seasons): Mandiyu 0,912; Rosario Central 0,912; Argentinos Juniors 0,911; Newell's Old Boys 0,857; Estudiantes de La Plata 0,846; Gimnasia y Tiro 0,733.

PARAGUAY
First Division final round *(at suspension)*

After 3 of 7 games (bonus points included): 1) Olimpia 9pts; 2) Cerro Porteno 6.25; 3) Guarani 4.75; 4) Sportivo Lugueno 4.40; 5) River Plate 2.50; 6) Atletico Colegiales, Cerro Cora, Nacional 2. *(Championship suspended and Olimpia declared winners)*

ECUADOR
First Division final round *(final)*

After 14 games: 1) Ecelec 19pts; 2) Nacional, Barcelona 18; 4) Green Cross, Delfin, Cuenca 13; 7) Liga Dep. Universitario Quito 11; 8) Dep. Quito 7.

BOLIVIA
Professional League
Semi-final round *(final standings)* — *top 3 of each group qualify for final round*

Group A: 1) Bolivar 11pts; 2) Oriente Petrolero 10; 3) San Jose 9; 4) Wilsterman 7; 5) Destroyers 1.
Group B: 1) Blooming 13; 2) The Strongest, 9; 3) Independiente Petrolero 6; 4) Ciclon, Guabira 4.

EL SALVADOR
First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Luis A. Firpo	21	12	4	5	31	14	28
Alianza	20	9	5	6	32	23	23
FAS	21	7	9	5	23	24	23
Baygon-ADET	20	7	8	5	26	22	22
Tiburones	21	8	6	7	26	27	22
Municipal Limeno	21	7	7	7	29	25	21
Atletico Marte	21	7	8	6	29	23	21
Aquila	21	6	6	9	28	39	18
Cojutepeque	21	4	9	8	20	31	17
Apaneca	21	2	8	11	15	22	12

HONDURAS
First Division

After 12 games: 1) Real Espana, Olimpia 17pts; 3) Marathon 14; 4) Platense, Progreso, Vida 11; 7) Real Maya, Victoria 10; 9) Motagua 9; 10) Petrotela 7.

MEXICO
First Division

Group 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Necaxa	21	8	8	5	30	27	24
Puebla	20	6	9	5	25	42	21
Santos	21	7	7	7	26	33	21
Univ.Guadalajara	20	7	6	7	24	28	20
Univ.Nuevo Leon	21	3	11	7	19	30	17
Group 2							
UNAM	21	8	3	10	36	30	19
Atlante	20	8	3	9	36	32	19
Leon	20	6	6	8	23	29	18
Morelia	21	6	5	10	31	39	17
Queretaro	21	4	7	10	20	37	15
Group 3							
Toluca	21	10	6	5	31	20	16
America	21	12	1	8	42	31	25
Cruz Azul	21	9	6	6	30	19	24
Tamaulipas	21	4	9	8	22	27	17
Veracruz	21	3	8	10	26	40	14
Group 4							
UA Guadalajara	21	9	10	2	28	12	28
Guadalajara	21	12	4	45	33	20	28
UT Neza	21	8	5	8	26	31	21
Monterrey	21	8	4	9	31	34	20
Atlas	21	8	5	8	27	22	19

After 38 games (played against each other home and away) the top two of each group qualify for the quarter-finals.

COLOMBIA
First Division final round *(final)*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	BP	Pts
Junior	6	3	1	2	14	11	1.5	8.5
Indep. Medellin	6	3	1	2	10	12	1.0	8
Nacional	6	2	1	3	12	10	.5	5.5
America	6	2	1	3	9	12	.25	5.25

COSTA RICA
First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alajuela	20	10	9	1	34	7	29
Heredia	20	10	6	4	31	17	25
Cartago	20	7	10	3	25	17	24
San Carlos	20	8	7	5	22	26	23
San Ramon	20	8	5	7	19	18	21
Saprissa	20	6	8	6	28	28	20
Puntarenas	20	4	11	5	27	26	19
Limon	20	5	8	7	18	21	18
Perez Zeledon	19	7	4	8	16	20	18
Belen	19	4	7	8	15	21	15
Carmelita	20	5	4	11	19	29	14
Turrialba	20	4	3	13	14	29	11

GUATEMALA
First Division

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Municipal	15	10	5	0	25
Sacachispas	15	7	7	1	21
Comunicaciones	16	7	6	3	20
Suchitepequez	16	6	7	3	19
Aurora	16	6	5	5	17
Izabal	15	5	5	5	15
Mictlan	15	5	5	5	15
Amatitlan	15	5	4	6	14
Chiquimulilla	16	5	3	8	13
Escuintla	15	4	4	7	12
Xelaju	15	2	5	8	9
Juventud Retalteca	15	1	2	12	4

MEN IN THE NEWS

● **COLOMBIAN** international goalkeeper Rene Higuita was released from jail in Bogota on January 3, on payment of £6,800 bail as the time limit of 120 days, during which a person can be detained without being formally charged, had expired. But the investigation into his breaking Colombian law by assisting in negotiating the release of a kidnap victim continues. Higuita had been arrested on June 4 and recently went on a 10-day hunger strike, but the 120-day limit became law only recently.

● **INTERNATIONAL** midfielder Carlos "Pibe" Valderrama was voted South American Player of the Year (1993) in the annual poll conducted by the *El Pais* newspaper of Uruguay, in which 350 journalists from all over the continent voted. Valderrama obtained 46 votes, followed by Marco Etcheverry (Bolivia) with 30 and Cafu (Brazil) and Fredy Rincon (Colombia) joint third with 28. Francisco Maturana (Colombia) was voted top coach followed by Tele Santana (Brazil).

The following South American All-Star team was also picked: Goycochea (Argentina), Perea (Colombia), Kanapkis (Uruguay), Capurro (Ecuador), Cafu (Brazil), Etcheverry (Bolivia), Maradona (Argentina), Alvarez (Colombia), Valderrama (Colombia), Muller (Brazil) and Rincon (Colombia).

● **ARGENTINIAN** goalkeeper Pedro Catalano took his record of consecutive appearances for Deportivo Espanol in the Argentinian national league to 301 as the tournament went into summer recess. Catalano is 42 and has been at the club since 1976.

● **LEADING TRANSFERS** — Marco Antonio Figueroa, 31 and leading Chilean Fist Division scorer, from Cobreloa (Chile) to Morelia (Mexico) for £350,000. Argentinian striker Ricardo Lunari from Universidad Catolica (Chile) to Atlas (Mexico).

A Century of World Football

PART SIX

1980-90

BY MIKE LANGLEY

The magical meatball

His greatest goal . . . Maradona beats and Shilton to score Argentina's seco against England at Mexico '86 (above)

But-iful! . . Platini celebrates against t Brazilians in the same tournament (ri

GREAT footballers — Pele, Cruyff, Beckenbauer, Best and now Baggio — are usually slender-hipped, often willowy and obviously athletic. But the 1980s were dominated by an exception.

Diego Armando Maradona was a Mr Cube or Magical Meatball of the game. Only 5ft 5ins tall and weighing nearly 12 stone — yet able to turn on the ball like Pele, cover ground like Cruyff, dummy like Best, switch feet like Baggio and direct a pass like Beckenbauer at his peak.

A note of wonder still sounds among a League of Ireland touring XI who were the first footballers from the British Isles to face Maradona.

Ray Treacy of Shamrock Rovers spoke for them all: "He was so small we thought it was the Argentinians' mascot warming up; then he came on as a sub — and, from the first touch, we knew he was brilliant. A little tank with the most powerful legs I've seen."

Two years later, at only 18, Maradona drew a crowd of 61,918 into Hampden Park — Scotland's biggest international gate of the 1978-79 season. They saw Argentina, fielding seven of their winning World Cup finalists, triumph 3-1 with two goals by Leo Luque and one by Maradona.

Scotland keeper George Wood afterwards echoed the Irish note of wonder: "Maradona is unbelievable. The best I've ever played against.

"Once he ran from their 18-yard line through the whole Scottish team, beating five men before being stopped by a last-ditch tackle. For his goal, he sent me six different ways and then wrong again before slotting it in."

Maradona might have repeated that scoring feat on his Wembley debut in 1980 if Kenny Sansom hadn't tripped him in the area. Daniel Passarella converted the penalty, but the World Cup-holders lost 3-1.

Maradona — the name alone — sold out Wembley to its night limit of 92,000. The box-office said: "We've never known such demand for a friendly. Thousands of applications have been returned."

Yet British fans had rarely seen him on TV. He wasn't in the 1978 World Cup, even though Cesar Menotti, Argentina's victorious manager, whittled his original 40 choices down to a 25 that included 17-year-old Maradona.

When FIFA's deadline arrived for a final 22, Menotti discarded him. "Too young", he said.Ossie Ardiles, who so often watched Maradona strolling round Menotti's camp gently bouncing a ball 1,000 times on his head, refuses to guess at what might have happened if Maradona had replaced Daniel Valencia in left midfield but says: "A year later I played with Maradona against Holland in a repeat of the World Cup final. In that year he had grown into greatness. He outshone us all."

'Maradona is unbelievable. The best I've ever played against. For his goal, he sent me six different ways and then wrong again before slotting it in'

At nine, he starred in a team of 12-year-olds. At 15, he was in the First Division for Argentinos Juniors. At 16, a full international as a sub against Hungary. A 17, on a World Cup shortlist — and at 20, when I first interviewed him in South America, an industry!

One agent was insufficient. He employed a team in Buenos Aires working from the offices of Maradona Productions on swish Viamonte Avenue. Multi-national sponsors hovered as we spoke during the Mudialito tournament in Montevideo, capital of Uruguay. One of Diego's two Porsches was parked outside the conference centre.

He also owned two Mercs, one for himself and the other for his father — a wrinkled, little nut-brown man who had laboured in the boneyards of the abattoir district in which huddled the mud-tracked slum that had been home for his eight children, five girls and three boys.

Upper-class Latins eavesdropping around me remarked later on his correctly this urchin from the backstreets expressed himself in Spanish — as we might if a gorblimey Cockney started sounding like an Old Etonian.

His Muhammad Ali-style entourage was already in evidence. Fifty of them, including his mother Dalma Salvadora and fiancee Claudia, were ensconced in a beach hotel 30 miles along the River Plate coast.

Wherever Maradona went, the hangers-on followed.

Chefs, barbers, bootblacks, press officer, personal physician, masseur, genial agent Jorge Cyterszpiler and his partners.

Also the massed relatives and what Americans call the gofers — who go for this, go for that and always charge it to the boss!

This retinue, hands outstretched and forever swelling in numbers, moved with him from Argentinos Juniors to Boca Juniors in the Buenos Aires' dockland and then to Barcelona in a world record transfer that split almost £7 million between Argentinos, Boca and Maradona. Lawyers' fees totalled over £170,000.

He'd become The Investment and I saw his introduction to 60,000 Catalans at the Nou Camp in 182 a few hours after he had disembarked from an Aerolineas Jumbo. He signed autographs, posed for pictures, and made a couple of little runs while FC Barcelona's president seized a microphone to promise a veritable cloudburst of titles and trophies.

Maradona said to me: "I'm glad to away from Argentina and the bitter sonal attacks since the World Cup. didn't play well but it wasn't for lac trying. Now I'm back in Barcelona determined to be a success."

He was referring to his disgrace i city a month previously when, with

Argentina 3-0 down to Brazil and sliding out of the 1982 World Cup in Spain, he jabbed his studs into the groin of Batista and was sent off.

But Barcelona brought him no luck as a club player. Hepatitis put him out for three months, then a tackle by Andoni Goicoechea — the ankle-crunching Butcher of Bilbao — restricted his League appearances to only 36 in two trophy-less seasons.

The arrival of Terry Venables as manager in 1984 provided a patriotic excuse for Maradona's £7 million departure to Naples.

He cited the Falklands War, but nursed his revenge for Goose Green and Tumbledown until the 1986 World Cup quarter final at the Azteca stadium in Mexico City.

England fans still spit on his "Hand of God" goal, thus saving themselves from facing the truth that Maradona's decisive second goal was exactly what he claims: "My greatest!"

He ran with the ball in the 55th minute from beyond his own segment of the circle, veered away from Peter Beardsley, left partly-injured Peter Reid panting in his wake, beat Terry Butcher, swayed by Terry Fenwick and bore down on the advancing Peter Shilton as Butcher tackled back.

Shilton told me: "He ran towards my left-hand post with the ball on his left foot, suggesting a shot at the wide side of goal. I went for the ball but, in a flash, he changed feet and shot the other way with his right in the split-second before Butcher got his tackle in.

"I'll never forget his nerve and his sureness of having time to beat both of us. But England should have got a man to him earlier. He was allowed to run too far."

About 60 yards, I'd say.

Maradona, as captain of Argentina, went on to hoist the World Cup after a 3-2 victory against West Germany in a final not blazing into life until the last quarter-of-an-hour.

Free of pressure at last, he led Naples next season to their first Italian championship plus the Italian Cup, followed by the UEFA Cup (5-4 against Stuttgart) and then the league again. Neapolitans alone, though, supported Maradona and his indisciplined team at Italia '90.

The defending Argentinians reached the final in Rome with four men suspended and two more (Pedro Monzon and Gustavo Dezotti) destined to be sent off in a dreadfully unambitious and wrangling match that West Germany won with a penalty. Disputed, of course!

Black marks abound against the name of Maradona.

Sex and drug scandals. The red card in Barcelona, the illicit goal against England, the shamelessly intended exploitation of a shoot-out in the 1990 final.

Yet taking him warts and all, he was the great star of the Eighties.

The one who filled grounds, turned matches in a trice and who led an averagely good side to two World Cup finals. A footballer blessed with such wizardry that he'd sometimes liven up practice matches by passing the ball firmly and accurately off his ample backside!

It's no empty honour to dub Diego Maradona the World No. 1 of the Eighties.

For this was an era of exceptional individuals, particularly in Europe where the Footballers of the Year included Michel Platini, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and Ruud Gullit.

Some of the other Eighties greats — for instance, Ian Rush at Liverpool, Gary Lineker in Japan, Bernd Schsuter in Spain — remain a force in club football.

A tiny elite of the Eighties even look forward to starring in the United States, which would mean a fourth World Cup for two 33-year-olds: Maradona and Germany's Lothar Matthaus.

If Gullit ends his quarrel with Dutch officialdom and if Marco van Basten's ankles are pronounced equal to the strain of a World Cup, then two more blasts from the past can take a final tilt at glory.

A young man's game? Not if you are immeasurably talented and built to last. They were in the Eighties!

'It's no empty honour to dub Diego Maradona the World No. 1 of the Eighties. For this was an era of exceptional individuals, particularly in Europe'

Leading players

MICHEL PLATINI (left) is France's record scorer with 41 goals, proof of a dead-ball accuracy honed by years of practice in swerving free-kicks round walls of wooden dummies. He won the French Cup with Nancy, his hometown club, and the French League with St. Etienne. But the golden years of this most graceful midfielder were spent at Juventus where his three successive European Footballer awards recognised his part in winning two Italian championships, a European Cup, a Cup-winners Cup — and, as captain of France, the 1984 European Championship.

DIEGO MARADONA, owner of the games's most versatile left foot and a star from childhood. But his friend Ossie Ardiles has pointed out that the price of two £7 million moves, two World Cup finals and a winners medal was "the sacrifice of Maradona"s youth; he never had the chance to be anonymous and foolish or to play many kick-arounds with his brothers and mates, the football he likes best."

KARL-HEINZ RUMMENIGGE was named Player of the Tournament in the 1980 European Championship. A quick, elusive striker who used the full width of the pitch and had a knack of heading goals while running stooped. He broke the German transfer record in 1984 when joining Inter for £2.5 million. Won 95 caps, scored 45 goals.

PAOLO ROSSI achieved the unprecedented by returning from a two-year "fixing" suspension and, within only 10 weeks, winning the 1982 World Cup for Italy and finishing as the tournament's top-scorer. His six goals all came after the opening round — notably a hat-trick that beat Brazil.

GARY LINEKER, aided by Peter Beardsley in his first World Cup start, scored three quick goals (14th, 15th and 35th minutes) against Poland to save England from a premature departure in the 1986 World Cup.

Lineker went on to top the scoring in Mexico and, with 48 goals, to retire as second only to Bobby Charlton in the list of all-time England scorers. A quick, alert and unusually cool striker who overcame serious hepatitis to regain his place among the best.

IAN RUSH, a lean and deadly Welshman, who was the cutting edge of a Liverpool machine that won seven League championships, three FA Cups, four League Cups and two European Cups in the Eighties. Juventus paid £3.2 million for Rush in 1987, but he didn't settle and was re-sold to Liverpool for whom he has now scored more than 200 League goals.

MARCO VAN BASTEN, an all-round centre-forward who makes goals for others while also ready to strike with his head, with either foot and from all across the pitch. A star of Ajax and now Milan, but revered in Holland for the tight-angled volley against the USSR that won the 1988 European Championship.

JAN CEULEMANS, a gawky 6ft 2ins Belgian striker who converted to a raider from midfield where his strength and magnificent left foot worried all defenders. Outstanding in the teams that reached the 1980 European Championship final and the 1986 World Cup semi-final. Turned down a 1981 transfer to Milan in favour of staying with FC Bruges as captain and eventual winner of more than 90 international caps.

Leading Teams

FRANCE, even though winning the 1984 European Championship in dazzling style, were the world's unluckiest team in the Eighties. Twice — in Spain '82 and Mexico '86 — they deserved a place in the World Cup final.

But they were beaten on penalties in the Seville semi-final against West Germany. Four years later in the Guadalajara semi, the merely efficient Germans found their brilliant foes, drained by penalties and the 100 degrees of a classic quarter-final against Brazil. So France never received the full rewards of such major talents as Platini, Alain Giresse, Manuel Amoros, Dominique Rocheteau, Marius Tresor and midfielder Jean Tigana. Tragique!

HOLLAND were always the bridesmaids until Munich in 1988 when the presence of four great footballers — Van Basten, Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard and the laser-booted Ronald Koeman — combined to overcome the USSR and win the European title.

LIVERPOOL (above) ruled English football through the 1980s like no club before or since. Managerial changes, Bob Paisley, Joe Fagan and then Kenny Dalglish, made no difference to a style based on passing and a defence-in-depth that swung easily into attacks led by Rush and Dalglish. But for the Heysel disaster, who is to say Liverpool might not have equalled Real Madrid's six Champions Cups?

Palacios joins Turkey run

AUGUSTO PALACIOS, the Peruvian-born national coach, has resigned and will coach Turkish club Genclerbirligi.

Palacios thus joins a mass exodus from South Africa to Turkey and his reported salary is four times what he made with the South African Football Association, making the offer difficult to refuse.

In the last 18 months, nine players have been signed by clubs in the Turkish First Division from South Africa's National Soccer League.

Fani Madida, who holds the record for the most number of goals scored in a single South African season, was the first to make the transition to a country with absolutely no cultural, historic or linguistic ties with southern Africa.

Madida moved from Kaizer Chiefs to then Turkish champions Beskitas after manager Gordon Milne had visited South Africa to see him in action

He is now in his second season at the Istanbul-based club, but there has been little success for the injury-prone striker.

He missed two European matches against IFK Gothenburg of Sweden last season and then broke a leg in Slovenia in the first round of this year's Cup-winners Cup.

Six other players have been signed in the last seven months by other Turkish clubs and most have gone on to make a favourable impact.

Four of them will now have Palacios as their boss. John Moshoeu, regarded as South Africa's most skilful player, has been one of the revelations for unfashionable Ankara-based Genclerbirligi, now just behind Galatasaray and Fenerbahce in the race for the championship.

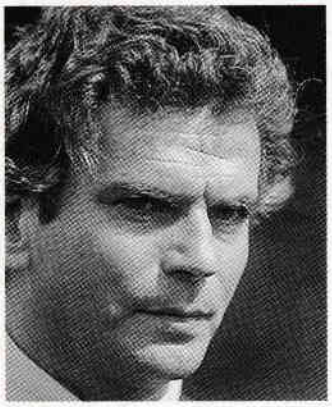
Moshoeu's skills, complimented by the goals of Zaire centre-forward Kona Ngole and the goalkeeping of Bosnian-born Ivo Simunic, have sent Genclerbirligi within two points of the front-runners.

Kona was signed from Jomo Cosmos, the South African club who reached the semi-finals of the African Cup-winners Cup in 1993, while Simunic comes from Orlando Pirates, whom he helped to a Cup victory before moving closer to home.

Now they have been joined by a fourth player from South Africa, Donald Khuse, who signed on a two-year contract from Kaizier Chiefs.

Khuse is one of only two players to have played in all of South Africa's 15 international matches since the lifting of the FIFA ban in 1992.

The other is national team captain Steve Komphela, who left Chiefs for unfashionable Turkish provincial club Gaziantepspor in August along with Tebeho Moloi of Orlando Pirates, who has two caps for South Africa.



Contender . . . Reinhard Fabisch.

SAFA must now seek their sixth national team coach in little more than the 18 months since being re-admitted to FIFA; hardly conducive to developing a strong and competitive national side. Reinhard Fabisch, currently Technical Director to the Zimbabwe FA, has emerged as a likely replacement for Palacios.

The start to the 1994 NSL season may have to be delayed while the disputes held over from the 1993 season are resolved. Following the National Soccer League's preliminary investigations, Bloemfontein Celtic, Chatsworth Rangers, D'Alberton Callies and Qwa Qwa Stars have been found to have illegally registered foreign players, and Jomo Cosmos, Hellenic, Rangers and Stars have been found guilty of fielding more than the three permitted foreigners.

Whether the NSL findings will result in fines or loss of points, which could affect the contentious relegation issues, has yet to be decided and the matters have now been compounded by appeals through lawyers.

Following a disastrous season by their own high standards Kaizer Chiefs, out of the 1994 African Cup competitions and with no domestic trophy on the shelf from 1993, did not renew English coach Geoff Hudson's contract.

His replacement is 38-year-old Philippe Troussier, formerly a successful coach in the Ivory Coast, with both the national team and the ASEC club of Abidjan.

BARRY BAKER AND MARK GLEESON

Mansour ends misery

WITH a live audience on the second television channel in France and massive satellite viewership, January's Africa Super Cup match in South Africa was the perfect opportunity for a positive advertisement of the continent's game.

The match pitted the two giants of Egyptian soccer, Al Ahly and Zamalek, whose matches back home in Cairo normally attract passionate crowds in excess of 100,000.

In Johannesburg, chosen as the venue last September, they managed to pull in less than 20,000 but still had enough people watching on TV to make their mark.

In the end, though, it was a major relief that the match-winning goal for Zamalek came five minutes from time as Ayman Mansour blasted home from the edge of the box — to spare the crowd the agony of another 30 minutes of extra time.

The two Egyptian clubs, admittedly hampered by a torrential downpour in the first half, put on a poor performance by which to judge African soccer.

Zamalek, winners in December of the African Champions Cup and Al Ahly, who took the African Cup-winners Cup the same month, seemed more intent with causing grievous bodily harm to each other than turning on the skills.

One player was sent off and five booked, but South African referee Petrus Mathebela should have taken more names.

It was the dismissal of Al Ahly's Mohammed Yousself that saw Zamalek gain the ascendency. He was sent off early in the second half for dissent and, only then with the one-man advantage, did Zamalek start setting up scoring opportunities.

Striker Emmanuel Amunike, who will be going to the World Cup with Nigeria later this year, had a few sharp chances, but it was Mansour who did the damage with a shot from the edge of the box that flew past Ahmed Shobier in the Al Ahly goal.

AFRICAN SUPER CUP

AL AHLY (Egy) 0 ZAMALEK (Egy) 1 (A Mansour 85)

HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** P. Mathebela (SA).

Al Ahly: Shoubier (capt), I Hassan, Abdelgelil (Abdelrahman 59), Khashaba, Abou Eldahab, El Hadidi, M. Youssef, Abdelaal, Rayan (Ramadan 75), H Hassan, Abdelsadek. ***Coach:*** Harris.

Zamalek: G El Sayed, Abdellatif (Marae 9), Alshishiny, Yaken, El Gandor, T. Mansour, I. Youssef, Nassar, A Mansour, Amunike, A Youssef. ***Coach:*** El Gohary.

MARK GLEESON

NSL LEAGUE FINAL TABLES

NSL CASTLE LEAGUE (First Division) — *Final Table*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mamelodi Suns	38	24	7	7	69	31	55
Moroka Swallows	38	21	10	7	44	25	52
Amazulu	38	17	14	7	43	34	48
Orlando Pirates	38	15	13	10	52	42	43
Kaizer Chiefs	38	15	12	11	42	35	42
Umtata Bucks	38	15	12	11	50	43	42
Hellenic	38	14	13	11	58	50	41
Chatsworth Ran	38	10	20	8	46	36	40
Pretoria City	38	11	17	10	39	40	39
Witbank Aces	38	14	10	14	52	55	36
Cape Town Spurs	38	13	11	14	43	37	37
Bloemfontein C	38	13	11	14	36	45	37
Vaal Professionals	38	10	16	12	49	44	36
QwaQwa Stars	38	10	16	12	40	38	36
D'Alberton Callies	38	14	8	16	44	48	36
Wits University	38	14	8	16	37	42	36
Dynamos	38	8	17	13	41	41	33
Jomo Cosmos	38	10	12	16	39	48	32
Lightbody's Santos	38	7	15	16	29	45	29
Welkom Eagles	38	1	6	31	23	97	8

Welkom Eagles, Lightbody's Santos, Jomo Cosmos and Dynamos relegated, subject to appeals against foreign-player use by other clubs.

Real Rovers and Royal Tigers promoted from OK Second Division.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Brendan Augustine (Umtata Bucks)

LEADING GOALSCORERS

1 ....Daniel **MUDAU** (Mamelodi Suns).....23
2 ....Robinson **SEAKAMELA** (Vaal Pros).....21
3 ....Buenene **NGADUANE** (QQ Stars).....18
4 ....Owen **NZIMANDE** (Amazulu).....15
Grant **YOUNG** (Hellenic).....15

NSL OK LEAGUE SECOND DIVISION — *'O' Stream Inland Division*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Rovers	22	18	2	2	46	16	38
Boksburg United	22	16	5	1	35	5	37
Ravens	22	10	7	5	22	14	27
Health Centre Utd	22	10	6	6	26	16	26
Ferrometals Utd	22	10	6	6	31	26	26
Swaraj United	21	9	4	8	35	24	22
Real Madrid	22	9	3	10	24	23	21
Blackpool B	21	6	8	7	37	31	20
Pretoria Callies	20	6	6	8	25	26	18
Ruto Cosmos	20	4	3	13	12	33	11
Panama Blues	22	2	2	18	13	76	6
Bluebells United*	22	1	4	17	8	25	6

* = *suspended*

● *Number of relegated clubs, sponsorship and format for 1994, still be to decided.*

NSL OK LEAGUE SECOND DIVISION — *'K' Stream Coastal Division*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Royal Tigers	20	14	4	2	38	19	32
Crusaders United	20	9	7	4	37	20	25
UPE Hotspurs	20	11	2	7	30	27	24
Battswood	19	8	5	6	30	14	21
Reservoir Hills U	20	9	3	8	29	34	21
African Wand	18	6	6	4	23	16	20
E London B'bells	19	8	1	10	24	27	17
Crystal Brains	19	6	5	6	19	22	17
Zulu Royals	20	7	3	10	16	30	17
PE Blackpool	19	4	5	10	16	25	13
College Tigers	20	1	5	14	13	42	7

OK LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFF: Real Rovers bt Royal Tigers 1-3 and 4-1 *(aet)*.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

1 ....Andries **SEBOLA** (Real Rovers).....17
2 ....Jerry **MTHETHWA** (Real Rovers).....14
3 ....Rally **MMOLA** (Real Rovers).....8
4 ....Eugene **AGULHAS** (Bettswood).....7

Three clubs are promoted from NSL 3rd Division: *Blackburn Rovers, Dayeton Highlanders and Morning Stars.*

CENTRAL AFRICA

CAMEROON

FIFA have banned World Cup finalists Cameroon from using their main ground, the 65,000-capacity Omnisports stadium in Yaounde.

The venue, hastily built for the 1972 African Nations Cup finals, has suffered from a lack of maintenance and is unsafe for spectators.

The suspension led to the cancellation of a planned tournament featuring the Cameroon national team, Senegal, French team Caen and Vitesse Arnhem from Holland.

Professional players in Europe are in uproar after an alleged Cameroon team played in an "international" friendly against Israel in Tel Aviv. The match was organised by an impressario, based in France, Richard Malange, and featured no recognised players nor received any official sanction from the Cameroon Federation. The African team lost 5-1.

GABON

GABON are cutting down on the increasing number of foreign players in their league by imposing new restrictions. Clubs will be able to register only four foreign-born players and play three during a match.

EAST AFRICA

BURUNDI

BURUNDI, ravaged by a brutal tribal war, have suffered a further blow with a year's suspension announced by FIFA. The tiny East African country pay the penalty for striker Bernard Abdi attacking the referee during a friendly against neighbours Rwanda. Abdi has been given a two-year suspension.

NORTH AFRICA

ALGERIA

THREE points separate the top eight clubs after 12 rounds of the championship. Unfashionable US Chaoula retain their lead with 16 points, one more than JS Bordj-Menaiel and USM Blida. Defending champions Mouloudia d'Oran are on 13 along with the other five clubs in the chasing pack.

EGYPT

TAHA ISMAIL returns for his third spell as coach of the national team, replacing Romanian Mircea Radulescu.

Ismail's first major task will be the African Nations Cup finals in Tunisia.

He will be assisted by Farouk Gaafar, one of Egypt's past greats. Champions Zamalek have signed Ghanaian international striker Joe Okyere, who played against them for Asante Kotoko in the 1993 African Champions Cup final.

MOROCCO

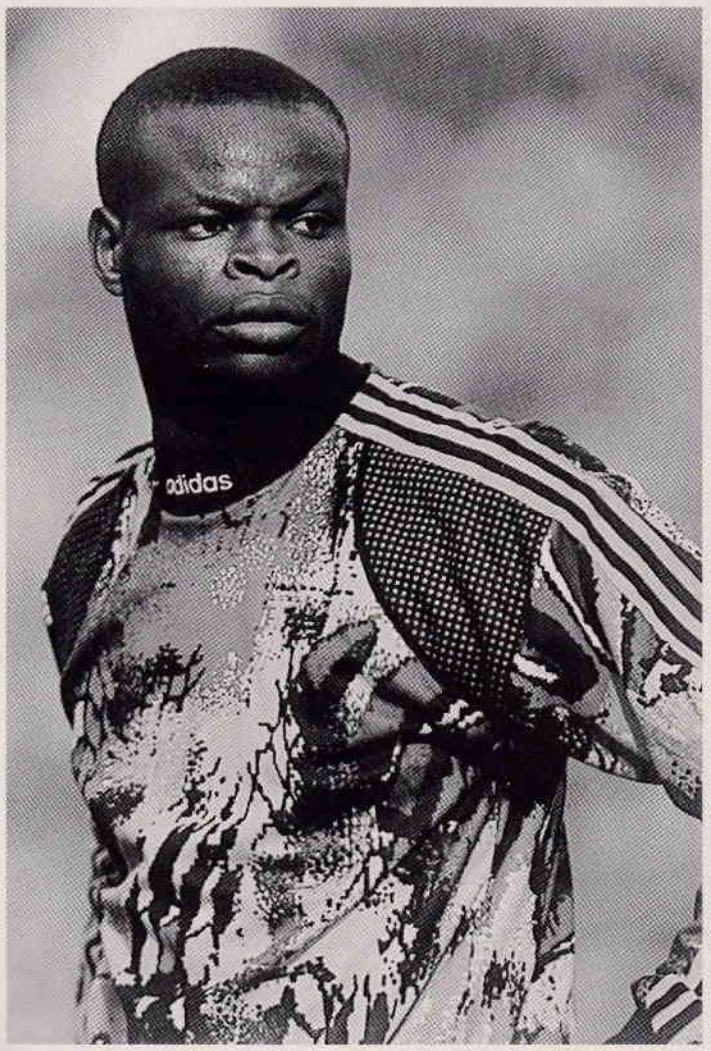
WYDAD CASABLANCA kept up African dominance of the Afro-Asian Cup beating PAS of Iran over two legs. The first outing, in Tehran, ended in a 0-0 draw, but goals from Daoudi (18th minute) and Saijeh (67th) gave Wydad a 2-0 aggregate win and the trophy.

TUNISIA

ESPERANCE have built up a four-point lead over Club Africain just past the halfway point. The Tunis club are the defending champions and have 26 points from 17 matches, with Club Africain on 22.

Third spot is shared by CA Bizerte, Etoile Sahel and CS Sfaxien.

Top man . . . Zanaco goalkeeper James Phiri has been named Zambia's Footballer of the Year for 1993.



Aziz Bouderbala, who is 31 and a member of the Moroccan team at the 1986 World Cup finals in Mexico, is making a comeback with an eye on a place in the squad for US '94.

Bouderbala retired last season but has now joined Swiss club St Gallen in his attempts to catch coach Abdellah Blinda's eye.

Olympic Casablanca stretched the gap between them and second-placed Wydad Casablanca to six points, but the defending champions have played 15 matches to Olympic's 16.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

MOZAMBIQUE

Castro replaces Coluna

JOSE CASTRO, former coach of the Mozambique national team, has taken over in charge of Ferroviario Maputo, runners-up in last year's championship.

The railway club were previously coached by former Benfica star Mario Coluna, who has accepted a post as technical director with the Mozambican Football Federation.

Portuguese-born Castro is a former player with Lisbon club Belenenses.

NAMIBIA

THE Under-20 team drew 1-1 with a touring German Under-17 side in the first of two international matches in Windhoek. The Namibians came from behind to net a late penalty through Goraseb after Flick had given the Germans the lead.

ZAMBIA

GOALKEEPER James Phiri, who plays for Zanaco, has been named as the country's Footballer of the Year for 1993.

Phiri took over as national team goalkeeper when David "Efford" Chabala was killed in the World Cup air disaster last April.

WEST AFRICA

BURKINA FASO

ARMY team ASFA have signed former Ghanaian international Abdul Razak on a two-year contract. Razak was African Footballer of the Year in 1978.

IVORY COAST

AFRICA SPORT have fired their coach Rachid Cheradi, after the failure to retain the Cup-winners Cup title, and replaced him with Belgian Rene Taelman, who has had two years coaching in Morocco.

GUINEA

FRENCH coach Boro Primorac, who was in charge of Valenciennes last season at the time of the attempted bribe by Marseille, has joined Guinea as coach of the national team ahead of the African Nations Cup finals.

MALI

MALI began preparations for their appearance in the African Nations Cup finals with a 2-1 win in Bamako over French club Angers. They then had a 1-1 draw against Burkina Faso and a 1-0 home victory over Senegal.

NIGERIA

STATIONERY STORES, who reached the semi-finals of the African Champions Cup last year, have been relegated from the First Division for failing to fulfil two outstanding fixtures.

WED 8 DEC

ACTION: Werder Bremen recover from 3-0 down to beat Anderlecht 5-3 in an astonishing tie in the Champions League . . . UEFA Cup-holders Juventus lose 2-1 away to Tenerife but reach the quarter-finals 4-2 on aggregate.

BRAZIL: Cruzeiro's international Nonato is banned for 210 days for kicking a lineswoman during a row over a goal awarded against them in a championship match against Corinthians — who won 2-1.

JAPAN: Verdy Yomiuri stir up major controversy, immediately after winning the second stage of the J.League, by deciding to move their "franchise" from the industrial city of Kawasaki to Chofu, in Tokyo's outskirts . . . Urawa Red Diamonds deny having bid for Liverpool's Ian Rush (below).

SOUTH AFRICA: Jomo Cosmos, semi-finalists at the first attempt in the African Cup-winners Cup, are relegated from the First Division after losing their final match 4-2 away to Witbank Aces.

SPAIN: Referee Juan Manuel Brito is suspended for four matches after wrongly sending off Atletico Madrid's Juan Vizcaino against Oviedo the previous Saturday. A disciplinary commission, using video evidence, decided he was wrong to rule that Vizcaino had deliberately tripped Oviedo midfielder Antonio Rivas . . . Valladolid reinstate Argentinian defender Walter Lozano one week after dismissing him for breaking curfew. Team-mates and fans had led protests at the decision.

UNITED STATES: George Mensah, former Ghana international, is charged in Newark with running an international drug ring which allegedly imported large quantities of heroin into New Jersey.

THUR 9 DEC

BELGIUM: Anderlecht, beaten 5-3 by Werder Bremen in the Champions League on Wednesday, sign Nigerian defender Chidi Nwanu from Beveren for £700,000 to substitute for Michel De Wolf after the veteran defender's injury against Ghent on Saturday.

GERMANY: Stuttgart coach Christoph Daum says he is quitting to take up a £500,000-a-year post in succession to Englishman Gordon Milne at Besiktas . . . Berti Vogts recalls Stefan Kuntz to the 22-man squad for a three-game trip to the United States and Mexico. *Squad:* Illgner, Koepke; Matthaus, Helmer, Kohler, Schulz; Buchwald, Effenberg, Hassler, Moller, Brehme, Gaudino, Strunz, Ziege, Sammer, Pflipsen, Eilts; Hobsch, Klinsmann, Kirsten, Thom, Kuntz.

FRI 10 DEC

ACTION: Egypt's Zamalek win the African Champions Cup when they beat Asante Kotoko of Ghana 7-6 in a penalty shoot-out after a goalless final second leg in Cairo. The first leg, in Kumasi, was also a 0-0 draw.

FRANCE: A poll of players by *L'Equipe* reveals Monaco coach Arsene Wenger as their choice to replace Gerard Houllier, who resigned as national manager after France failed to qualify for the World Cup finals. He receives 73 votes, compared with 37 for Bordeaux trainer Rolland Courbis and 27 for Michel Platini.

HOLLAND: Ajax release Danish defender John Hansen to return home after three years and join OB Odense. Injury contributed to restricting Hansen, 27, to just seven league appearances with Ajax . . . Feyenoord lose 1-0 to Roda, their first league defeat of the season.

ITALY: The Italian government gives cash crisis club Napoli an extra year to pay £3million in back tax. The club's debts enforced the recent sales of key players such as Gianfranco Zola and Massimo Crippa.

PORTUGAL: Sporting, joint top of the League but just knocked out of the UEFA Cup, dismiss manager Bobby Robson and replace him with ex-national team boss Carlos Queiros.

SUDAN: A match between top teams Al-Hilal and Al-Mourada is abandoned after fans riot and attack players and officials of the visiting side, seriously injuring the Al-Mourada coach, Ahmad Babiker.

SWITZERLAND: FIFA say a first "proper" World Club Cup, involving 16 teams in a two-week tournament, is under consideration for 1995.

SAT 11 DEC

ACTION: The US beat Norway's Kongsvinger 2-1 at Fullerton, California . . . Paris SG beat Strasbourg 2-0 to move six points clear in France . . . Bayer Leverkusen are winter champions in Germany despite being held 1-1 by Wattenscheid in their last match before the break.

EGYPT: The CAF bans Ghana's Asante Kotoko and the Ivory Coast's ASEC indefinitely from its club competitions because of fan violence after their Champions Cup clash in Kumasi, Ghana, on October 31. Kotoko beat ASEC 2-0, provoking civil unrest in Ghana in which one person died and retaliatory violence in the Ivory Coast, where 25 died.

PORTUGAL: Benfica win 1-0 away to Amadora to stay top of the table but make greater headlines off the pitch when millionaire president Jorge De Brito offers his resignation at a stormy general assembly after being attacked for allowing the club to run up huge debts and lose key players such as Paulo Futre.

SUN 12 DEC

ACTION: Sao Paulo retain the World Club Cup (above), beating Milan 3-2 in the final in Tokyo . . . Palmeiras beat outsiders Vitoria of Bahia 1-0 in the first leg of the Brazilian national championship final . . . AEK stay three points clear in Greece despite losing 1-0 to struggling Skoda-Xanthi . . . Parma take advantage of Milan's absence to win 4-0 away to Cagliari in Italy and edge ahead of the champions at the top of the table on goal difference.

ENGLAND: Wimbledon's controversial centre-forward John Fashanu considers the possibility of playing at the World Cup finals for Nigeria, thanks to a loophole in international regulations which may not count two appearances for England in friendlies.

JAPAN: The JFA abandons its plan to appoint Sao Paulo coach Tele Santana as head coach of Japan's national team because of Santana's TV commitments during the World Cup.

MON 13 DEC

BRAZIL: Pele's lawyers claim he has proof to support his legal counter-suit against CBF president Ricardo Teixeira in a row over Brazilian domestic football TV rights. Pele (below) is also suing the CBF over alleged unauthorised use of his picture in a promotional sticker-book project.

PORTUGAL: Sporting beat Beira-Mar 1-0 in their first match under new coach Carlos Queiros.

SWITZERLAND: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia and Georgia are warned by UEFA they may be barred from hosting qualifying games for the 1996 European Championship because of "military conflict." UEFA says all the Federation's 46 members have given notice of wanting to enter the draw in Manchester on January 22. The qualifying tournament will be formulated in six six-team groups and two five-team groups. Winners and the runners-up in each six-team group advance to the final round. The runners-up in the five-team groups compete in a two-leg play-off for one place in the finals.

TURKEY: Besiktas formally engage Cristoph Daum as technical director in succession to Gordon Milne.

UKRAINE: Kiev Dynamo replace coach Mikhail Fomendo with a former team-mate, Iosif Sabo but deny this has anything to do with the financial scandal in which the club are embroiled.

TUE 14 DEC

ACTION: Spain beat Germany 3-1 to top European Under-21 group three and reach the quarter-finals.

ENGLAND: Roland Nilsson withdraws his threat to quit Sheffield Wednesday at Christmas and retire to be with his homesick family back in Sweden.

GERMANY: Bernd Schuster of Bayer Leverkusen receives a six-week ban after being sent off for a retaliatory foul on Dynamo Dresden's Thomas Rath in a Cup match on December 1.

JAPAN: Yomiuri Kawasaki Verdy abandon plans to move next year to Chofu, Tokyo, because of the storm the proposal aroused.

SPAIN: Atletico Madrid give a trial to Ivory Coast captain Serge-Alain Maguy.

SWITZERLAND: The draw for the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup is: Borussia Dortmund v Inter; Cagliari v Juventus; Eintracht Frankfurt v Austria Salzburg; Boavista v Karlsruhe. Matches will be played March 2 or 3 and March 16 or 17.

UNITED STATES: FIFA officials in Las Vegas unveil a proposal to stage a 16-team World Club Champion-ship every two years starting in 1995.

WED 15 DEC

ACTION: Argentina beat Germany 2-1 in Miami in a World Cup draw special.

ENGLAND: Liam Brady, the former Republic of Ireland midfielder, is appointed manager of Brighton.

PORTUGAL: Tragedy in Lisbon as Russia striker Sergei Cherbakov, of Sporting Lisbon, breaks his back in a car crash when returning home after a players' farewell dinner to honour departing coach Bobby Robson. The 21-year-old Ukrane-born striker fractured his skull and two vertebrae when the car he was driving crashed into two others in Lisbon. Surgeons say he has no movement in his legs and, though he may walk eventually, he will never play football again.

SPAIN: Valencia appoint Hector Nunez as new coach in succession to Dutchman Guus Hiddink.

THUR 16 DEC

AUSTRIA: Austria Salzburg switch the home leg of their UEFA Cup quarter-final against Eintracht Frankfurt to Vienna because their own Lehener stadium is too small to cope.

BELGIUM: An Antwerp court sentences Nigeria's John Etim, in his absence, to five months' imprisonment for possessing drugs and stolen identity cards. Etim, who played for Lokeren and Lierse, had already been sentenced in his absence to two years' imprisonment for raping two minors in his flat. Lierse still officially own the player but a club spokesman says: "We have no idea where he is."

FINLAND: National boss Tommy Lindholm calls for the country's season to run from autumn to spring as in many other European countries "for the sake of the national team."

FRANCE: Metz, facing an injury crisis, re-sign 30-year-old midfielder Dragoljub Brnovic. The former Yugoslav international had been without a club since his contract with Metz expired in 1992.

HOLLAND: The KNVB gives the go-ahead to allow fireworks to be let off at the start of league matches in an experiment in trying to regulate the ad hoc setting-off of rockets by fans.

FRI 17 DEC

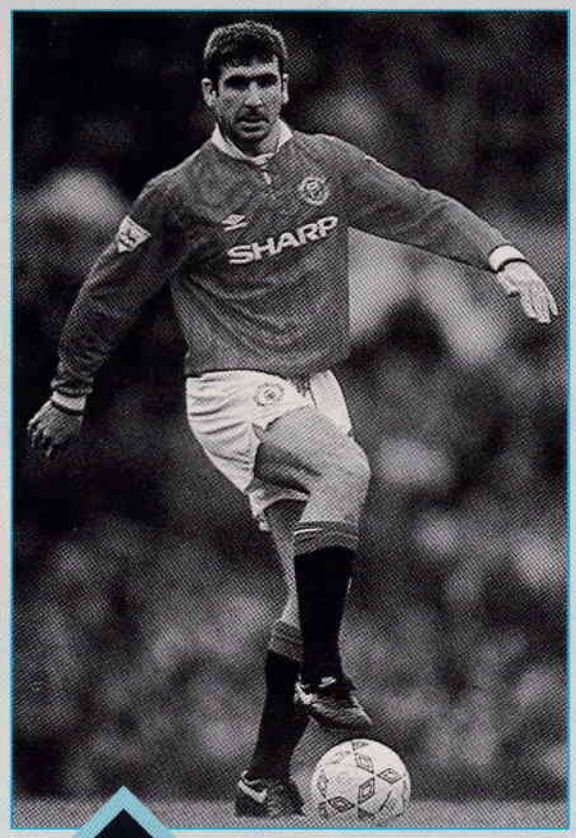
UNITED STATES: FIFA and the World Cup organisers confirm three points for a win for the group matches at USA94 but decide to stay with standard extra time and penalties if matches in the later stages end level after 90 minutes . . . the US, Sweden, Colombia and Bolivia will play in a tournament from February 18-20 at the Orange Bowl in Miami.

SAT 18 DEC

UNITED STATES: Germany beat the United States comfortably by 3-0 in a World Cup draw curtain-raiser . . . the Dutch federation announces that discussions for Johan Cruyff to take over the World Cup effort have broken down and that Dick Advocaat is expected to carry on . . . FIFA's World Footballer of the Year accolade is granted to Roberto Baggio.

SUN 19 DEC

UNITED STATES: The World Cup draw takes place in Las Vegas with various entertainment stars but without Pele.



PLAYER OF THE MONTH: **Eric Cantona . . .** for bringing, single-handed, an extra dimension of skill and vision to the English league scene.

MON 20 DEC

ARGENTINA: The Argentinian Federation launches an appeal to FIFA, via Italian Federation chief Antonio Matarrese, for Claudio Caniggia's 13-month cocaine dope test ban to be reduced.

TUE 21 DEC

CAMEROON: The national team's World Cup preparations are threatened when FIFA suspends the main Omnisports stadium in Yaounde for international games because of "poor general organisation and poor facilities."

WED 22 DEC

ACTION: Mexico and Germany draw 0-0 in a friendly in Mexico City while the German media hit back at their players over the previous day's "media silence" and demand the sacking of Lothar Matthaus as national captain . . . Bolivia lose 3-1 in San Sebastian, Spain, to a Basque XI.

SUN 26 DEC

FRANCE: Roberto Baggio collects another award, this time as European Footballer of the Year in the long-running poll organised by the Paris magazine, *France Football*. Dennis Bergkamp is runner-up with Eric Cantona third.

MON 27 DEC

ECUADOR: Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral in Guayaquil of Ecuador midfielder Carlos Munoz, who was killed in a car crash near the city the previous day. Munoz, 29, was a member of the Ecuador side which reached this year's Copa America semi-finals, which were held in Ecuador.

GERMANY: Franz Beckenbauer takes over as coach of Bayern Munich after the departure of Erich Ribbeck who is paid over £175,000 compensation. Beckenbauer had been an executive vice-president at Bayern, with which he made his reputation as a player in the 1960s and 1970s, since the autumn of 1992. He also steered West Germany to World Cup glory at Italia '90.

TUE 28 DEC

BRAZIL: Barcelona striker Romario says he wants friend and former teammmate Edmundo of Palmeiras to be recalled to Brazil's attack for the World Cup finals.

HOLLAND: Wim Jansen, technical director of champions Feyenoord, quits to help fellow Dutchman Leo Beenhakker in charge of the Saudi Arabia national team preparing for the World Cup finals. Jansen spent his career at Feyenoord apart from brief spells in the United States and at Ajax. He won 65 caps and rejoined his old club three seasons ago.

WED 29 DEC

BELGIUM: In an astonishing survey by daily newspaper *Het Volk*, 49 per cent of Belgium's First Division players say they believe match-fixing takes place.

BRAZIL: Pele returns to Santos as a director at the club where he spent 17 years of his career. Pele says the club are 1.3million in debt. His first move is to renew the contract of coach Pepe, his old outside-left partner in the early 1960s . . . state justice officials announce a campaign to root out corruption in the domestic game. Spokesman Sergio Cabral Filho says: "We want to guararantee the workers who save hard-earned money to attend games that they're not being defrauded. Football was used for 20 years from the 1960s by the military dictorship as a propaganda tool. The military left power but left the old corrupt structures behind and the same administrators."

GERMANY: Franz Beckenbauer (above), on his first formal day in charge, promises to turn Bayern Munich back into German champions.

ITALY: Paul Gascoigne returns to Lazio after a four-day Christmas with a mysterious thigh injury which is likely to rule him out of the weekend game against Sampdoria.

NIGERIA: Sports Council president Chief Akinwunmi says he wants to appoint former Tottenham boss Terry Venables as coach alongside Clemens Westerhof for the World Cup campaign.

PORTUGAL: Barcelona's Romario and Ronald Koeman lead the string of internationals who agree to play against Sporting on January 11 in a match to raise money for injured forward Sergei Cherbakov.

SPAIN: Real Madrid face a new crisis, not of their own making this time, as the Spanish government bids to rescue the the troubled Banco ➢

OBITUARY

CARLOS MUNOZ, Ecuador international midfielder, died aged 29 in a car crash in Guayaquil on December 26. Munoz was key figure in the Ecuador side which reached the semi-finals of the last Copa America.

SIR MATT BUSBY, former Manchester United manager who survived the Munich air disaster in 1958 which killed eight of his players, dies aged 84. Busby was manager of United from 1945-1969 and guided them to become the first English team to win the Champions Cup in 1968. Under Busby, United also won the FA Cup twice (1948 and 1963) and the league championship five times (1952, 1956, 1957, 1965 and 1967). Busby was knighted in 1968.

FRANCISCO ZULUAGA, former Colombia defender, dies in Medellin aged 64. Zuluaga, born on February 4, 1929, was the only Colombian to hold his place at Millonarios after the wholesale pirate imports of foreign stars in the early 1950s.

DICK DONALD, elder statesman of Scottish football and chairman of Aberdeen through the all-seater redevelopment of Pittodrie and Cup-winners Cup success, dies aged 82.

HARALD HENNUM, former Norwegian international, dies aged 65. Born on May 25, 1928, Hennum played 43 times for Norway and scored 25 goals, a post-war record. Hennum was twice league top scorer and four-times a cup-winner with Skeid Oslo.

HANS NORDAHL, schemer for Skeid Oslo between 1936 and 1956, dies aged 75. Nordahl, no relation to the famous Swedfish brothers, scored eight times for Norway in 19 internationals. He was five times a Cup-winner with 70 league goals between 1948 and 1959.

FRITHJOF ULLEBERG, a bronze medal-winner with Norway at the 1936 Olympic Games, dies aged 81. Ulleberg played for Lyn Oslo and 14 times for Norway in the 1930s — including the famous 2-0 victory over Germany in front of Hitler at the Berlin Olympics.

HUGHES ROGOMBE, Gabon international from the ASMO club, who died aged 23. He played previously for CS Batavea.

Espanol de Credito (Banesto) whose affilite Dorna controls the club's commercial and sponsorship rights.

TURKEY: Injury-hit champions Galatasaray sign Sweden World Cup defender Roger Ljung, 27, from Admira Wacker of Austria in time to beat the Champions League deadline. Galatasaray have been upset by injuries to German defender Falko Gotz, midfielder Okan Buruk and Swiss striker Kubilay Turkyilmaz.

UKRAINE: Ukraine's coach Oleg Bazilevich says the federation is so poor it cannot afford to arrange any international friendlies in preparation for the European championship qualifiers.

TEAM OF THE MONTH:

Deportivo La Coruna . . .

for carrying on where they left off midway through last season and seriously threatening to break the Spanish championship stranglehold of the Big Two.

THUR 30 DEC

BELGIUM: Raymond Goethals, former coach of Belgium, Anderlecht and Marseille, says he has been offered the job of managing Morocco at the World Cup finals. Goethals, 72, says he understands the federation had 10 candidates but that King Hassan insisted on his appointment. He adds: "I've asked them to contact me again in early January." Goethals says he has turned down a similar offer from Cameroon.

BRAZIL: The president of the Rio state assembly only further inflames the corruption row when he deletes from the assembly agenda a proposal to set up an inquiry into allegations by three referees about a scheme to fix results in Carioca championship. The decision is described as "a disgrace" by proposal supporter Sergio Cabral Filho . . . Romario is reprimanded by Brazil assistant Mario Zagalo for recommending Edmundo for a World Cup place.

GERMANY: Speculation regarding the Bayern Munich coaching post barely abates as Franz Beckenbauer insists that he will step down at the season's end. Long-time successor candidates are headed by Arsene Wenger of Monaco and Dutchman Leo Beenhakker.

global TRANSFERS

(Loan moves in italics)

ALMIR	F	Santos	Bellmare Hiratsuka
*Brett **ANGELL***	*F*	*Southend United*	*Everton*
Karsten **BARON**	F	Hamburg SV	Bayern Munich
Gudni **BERGSSON**	D	Tottenham	Valur Reykjavik
BRANCO	D	Gremio	Fluminense
LULA	D	Sao Paulo	Sporting Lisbon
*Gerry **CREANEY***	*F*	*Celtic*	*Portsmouth*
Johnny **EKSTROM**	F	Belenenses	Real Betis
Darren **FERGUSON**	M	Manchester United	Wolves
Marco A. **FIGUEROA**	F	Cobreloa (Chi)	Morelia (Mex)
Ivan **HASEK**	M	Strasbourg	Sanfrecce Hiroshima
*Trifon **IVANOV***	*M*	*Real Betis*	*Neuchatel Xamax*
Roger **LJUNG**	D	Admira Wacker	Galatasaray
Ricardo **LUNARI**	F	Univ. Catolica (Chi)	Atlas (Mex)
Lee **MARTIN**	D	Manchester United	Celtic
Liam **O'BRIEN**	M	Newcastle United	Tranmere
*Darko **PANCEV***	*F*	*Internazionale*	*Leipzig*
Oleg **PROTASOV**	F	Olympiakos	Gamba Osaka
RENATO	F	Flamengo	Atletico Mineiro
RONALDO	D	Sao Paulo	Shimizu S-Pulse
Ronny **ROSENTHAL**	F	Liverpool	Tottenham Hotspur
*Paul **STEWART***	*M*	*Liverpool*	*Crystal Palace*
Akhrik **TSVEIBA**	D	Kiev Dynamo	Gamba Osaka

ITALY: Paul Gascoigne's rare appearances for Lazio are costing the club around £400 per minute, according to the *Corriere dello Sport*, based on an annual salary of £900,000 computed against only 32 appearances in 18 months.

PARAGUAY: The chaotic Paraguayan season comes to a bizarre end when league officials vote in committee that Olimpia of Asuncion be awarded the 1993 championship. The championship had been suspended earlier in the month on government orders after corruption claims.

PORTUGAL: Four players are sent off as champions Porto draw 1-1 with local rivals Boavista. Porto, who score through Kostadinov, lose three players and Boavista one.

RUSSIA: Oleg Romantsev, coach of champions Spartak Moscow, is named Russian Coach of the Year, ahead of Vladimir Salkov of Rotor Volgograd.

FRI 31 DEC

BRAZIL: State police began an independent investigation of their own into allegations that refs were told to fix results in the Rio championship.

COLOMBIA: Goalkeeper Rene Higuita is ordered to be released from Bogota's Modelo prison because he has been held without charge beyond the legal 120-day limit. Deputy Prosecutor-General Francisco Jose Sintura says, however, that Higuita may yet face charges over accusations under the anti-kidnap legislation . . . Colombia midfielder Carlos Valderrama is voted South American Footballer of the Year for the second time, by the Montevideo newspaper *El Pais*. He receives 46 votes, 16 more than Bolivia's Marco Etcheverry. Brazil defender Cafu of Sao Paulo ties for third place on 28 votes with Colombia striker Freddy Rincon.

ITALY: French striker Jean-Pierre Papin says he may yet be ready to consider ending his career back with Marseille once his Milan contract expires in 1995.

UKRAINE: State prosecutors reveal a mound of evidence supporting allegations of attempted match-fixing by officials of bottom club Metalurg Zaporizha.

THAILAND: Germany boss Berti Vogts, on a holiday visit to Thailand, says Brazil are his favourites to win the World Cup.

SAT 1 JAN

ACTION: Rayo Vallecano draw 0-0 with leaders La Coruna in the only major competitive action in European football beyond the British Isles.

SUN 2 JAN

ACTION: Milan win 1-0 away to Reggiana, despite the expulsion of Jean-Pierre Papin, to extend their lead over Juventus and Sampdoria to two points . . . in Spain, Barcelona lose 2-0 to Gijon, thus allowing La Coruna to edge two points clear.

COLOMBIA: National manager Francisco Maturana says Colombia will be going to the World Cup finals with big things in mind.

MON 3 JAN

GERMANY: Nurnberg appoint Rainer Zobel as their third coach this season in succession to Dieter Renner who has switched to a managerial role after himself succeeding Willi Entenmann last November.

ITALY: Paul Gascoigne is ruled out for possibly two more weeks after X-rays confirm he cracked a rib against Sampdoria . . . Osvaldo Bagnoli denies reports that he may quit as Inter coach after the defeat by Atalanta.

COLOMBIA: A lawyer for Rene Higuita deposits £8,000 in a Bogota bank to bail the goalkeeper out of jail. Assistant prosecutor Francisco Sintura denies reports that Higuita might play in the World Cup finals, saying: "Until the case is resolved, Higuita will not be allowed out of the country."

TUE 4 JAN

BRAZIL: Botafogo, Fluminense and Flamengo and three minor clubs say they are organising their own competition for the first four months of 1994 and will not take part in the Rio de Janeiro Carioca state championship. This follows referees' allegations that Rio federation director Wagner Canazaro ordered them to fix match results.

FRANCE: Monaco coach Arsene Wenger says he favours reducing teams to 10 men each to bring greater excitement and entertainment back into football.

WED 5 JAN

ITALY: Inter open negotiations to loan Macedonian striker Darko Pancev (right), who has not played a full game this season, to German strugglers Leipzig for the rest of the season.

REP IRELAND: Foreign Minister Dick Spring warns Irish fans to ignore American touts offering tickets at 10 times their value for the World Cup ties in June . . . the Republic secure warm-up friendlies against Russia on March 23 in Dublin, against Holland in Utrecht on April 20 and Germany in Hannover on May 29. Colombia have withdrawn from a proposed fixture in Dublin on May 20.

PORTUGAL: FC Porto move into second place, ahead of Sporting but behind Benfica, thanks to a 4-1 home win over Uniao Madeira.

WHAT'S ON

FEBRUARY

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

International: Fiorentina v Colombia.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Internationals: Belgium v Malta, Italy v France (Naples).

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Internationals: Sweden v Colombia (Miami), United States v Bolivia (Miami).

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Internationals: Colombia v Bolivia (Miami), United States v Sweden (Miami).

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Internationals: Morocco v Finland (Casablanca), Ivory Coast v Ghana (Abidjan).

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

International: Mexico v Sweden (Los Angeles).

MARCH

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2

Champions League: Moscow Spartak v Barcelona, Monaco v Galatasaray, Milan v Werder Bremen, Anderlecht v Porto.

Cup-winners Cup — Quarter-finals, 1st leg: Ajax v Parma, Torino v Arsenal, Benfica v Bayer Leverkusen, Real Madrid v Paris SG.

UEFA Cup — Quarter-finals, 1st leg: Borussia Dortmund v Internazionale, Cagliari v Juventus, Eintracht Frankfurt v Austria Salzburg, Boavista v Karlsruhe.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

Internationals: Brazil v Argentina (Rio de Janeiro), Colombia v Mexico.

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

International: Scotland v Holland (Hampden Park, Glasgow).

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

Internationals: England v Denmark (Wembley), Wales v Norway, Hungary v Switzerland.

SATURDAY MARCH12

International: United States v South Korea (Fullerton, Ca).

American Airlines®

DALLAS CUP® XIV

Live from TEXAS

Major TV breakthrough for Dallas Cup

THE American Airlines Dallas Cup XV, the world's most prestigious youth club soccer tournament, kicks off on March 27 in Dallas and will feature a major new attraction for soccer fans.

For the first time teams playing in the Super Group will compete for the Under-19 World Club Championship.

"We are extremely honoured to host this event. The American Airlines Dallas Cup is known worldwide for its competition. The Super Group has come to represent the highest quality of youth club soccer," says tournament executive director Bill Stroube.

According to Alan Rothenberg, chairman and chief executive officer of World Cup US '94 and president of the US Soccer Federation: "The World Club Championship is an excellent example of the incredible soccer opportunities offered to youngsters worldwide. The World Cup plans to build on this enthusiastic momentum while establishing a legacy for youth in the United States."

Entry into the Under-19 World Club Championship is by invitation. Sixteen teams will be selected from the world's premier clubs with strong commitments to youth soccer. Four premier clubs will be selected from the US.

WORLD SOCCER has sponsored Celtic and Tottenham Hotspur and they are among the clubs already committed for this year's event. The others include: Real Madrid (Spain), Milan (Italy), River Plate (Argentina), Kaiserslautern (Germany), Tahuichi (Bolivia), Select XI (Japan), UNAM Pumas (Mexico), Club Brugge (Belgium), Stahl Linz (Austria), Select XI (Dominican Republic), NSL Selects (Canada) and Guadalajara FC (Mexico).

Final to be seen worldwide

THE Under-19 World Club Championship Final will be shown live on one of America's leading satellite networks, *ESPN TV*. The Final, at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, will be shown on *ESPN International* and its affiliates in 45 countries throughout Europe, North, Central and South America and Asia.

"We are extremely honoured," says Stroube, "to be associated with *ESPN*. They are truly the pros of sports programming.

"With a potential base exposure of 100,000,000 homes and incredible international growth opportunity, this relationship is ideal for the Under-19 World Club Championship and a major breakthrough to show live soccer throughout the States."

PAST SUPER GROUP UNDER-19 CHAMPIONS

1980	Texas Longhorns
1981	Royal Navy (Britain)
1982	Lagos (Nigeria)
1983	NSL Select (Canada)
1984	NSL Select
1985	Trebor Lions (Nigeria)
1986	Dallas Comets
1987	Tahuichi (Bolivia)
1988	Tahuichi
1989	Tahuichi
1990	Tahuichi
1991	Moscow Dynamo (USSR)
1992	West Ham United
1993	Real Madrid

American Airlines tops sponsors team

American Airlines, a major sponsor of soccer throughout the US and the world, continues as title sponsor of the American Airlines Dallas Cup XV. Additional committed sponsors include Coca-Cola, *The Dallas Morning News*, Fuji Film, The Harvey Hotels, Lotto Italia, Plano Sports Center, RR Donnelley & Sons, *Super Futbol*, and *WORLD SOCCER*.

THE GREAT American Dream

Win a fantastic trip for two to the US

FANCY a trip to the States next month? Want to watch Tottenham and Celtic take on the cream of Europe and South America in one of the most prestigious competitions in football?

Well, if you do — we've got the prize for you. We've got two tickets up for grabs to attend the American Airlines Dallas Cup XV International Tournament which takes place on March 27-April 3, 1994.

The competition is one of the biggest youth tournaments in football and this year's event will feature the giants of the game.

Celtic and Spurs lead the British challenge as they take on the might of Real Madrid, Argentina's River Plate, Italy's Milan, Belgium's Club Brugge, Kaiserslautern from Germany and Brazil's Vasco Da Gama in the Under-19 World Youth Club Championship.

And as well as the football there's so much more to enjoy with the chance to sample the sights and sounds of Dallas, including the swinging West End District, Six Flags Over Texas Amusement Park, Southfork Ranch and the Kennedy Museum in Elm Street.

This amazing prize includes two American Airlines return flight tickets from Gatwick to Dallas Fort Worth Airport . . . transportation to and from the airport . . . hotel accommodation (twin-bedded room) for four nights . . . three meals a day . . . Dallas Cup Entertainment Package.

It's a prize you won't want to miss.

HOW TO ENTER

TACKLE the question and then write your answer on a postcard, add your name, address, postcode, telephone number and age.

Send your entry to: Dallas Cup Competition, *WORLD SOCCER*, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London, SE99 OBB. The correct entry selected after the closing date of Monday February 21, 1994 will win those tickets to the United States.

Because of the nature of the prize, the winner, if under 18, *must* be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

There can be no cash equivalent. The Editor's decision is final.

QUESTION

Dallas is one of the nine World Cup US '94 venues. Can you name the other eight?

ZICO in spit storm

Childish . . . Zico of Kashima Antlers.

THE J.League's first season drew to an exciting close with wins in the Emperor's Cup for unfancied Yokohama Flugels and the J.League Suntory Championship for Verdy Kawasaki.

But the final game of the Championship was marred by a spitting incident that led to Zico's sending off eight minutes from time. He is now talking of quitting Japanese football when the new first stage ends in June.

The young Flugels side took Japan's equivalent of the FA Cup in style, surprisingly overcoming Verdy 2-1 in the quarter-final and routing first-stage champions Kashima Antlers 6-2 in extra time in the final in Tokyo . . . the first in 11 years featuring neither Verdy (Yomiuri) nor Marinos (Nissan).

Flugels had keeper Atsuhiko Mori and left-back Moner suspended after semi-final bookings. Kashima were without Zico, who tore a muscle in the semi-final with Shimizu S-Pulse.

Kashima went ahead in the sixth minute through Hisashi Kurosaki; and Flugels' first penalty on the stroke of half-time came out of the blue.

The second, in the 63rd minute, was the turning point. Full-back Kenji Oba was sent off for tripping Masakiyo Maezono near the edge of the box.

Four minutes into injury time, full-back Ryosuke Okuno levelled the score with the final kick of the 90 minutes, a spectacular half-volley into the top corner. A powerful header by Ippei Watanabe eight minutes from the end of extra-time gave Flugels a 3-2 lead — and the floodgates opened. Paraguayan Amarilla, ineffective till then, added two more within five minutes, and Yasuharu Sorimachi hit a sixth with the final touch.

This was the sixth Emperor's Cup success for Flugel's manager Shu Kamo, after two at Yanmar and three in charge of Nissan (now Yokohama Marinos). It vindicated his brave strategy of applying intense zonal pressure, perfected in the course of the season, and also confirmed his eye for promising young players. Flugels should keep on improving.

Kashima's misery continued a week later in the first leg of the J.League Suntory Championship, the play-off for the winners of the first and second stages of the J.League to decide the grand championship.

Verdy released Dutch defender Erick Van Rossum — a tower of strength — before the game. Manager Yasutaro Matsuki wanted to keep him but was overruled by directors who favoured Brazilian Paulo Cesar Bonfim.

That was all the stranger in that Paulo had returned to Brazil, having failed to get a first-team game after several months at the club. He arrived back just in time for the most important match of the season.

The word is that some of Verdy's stars, notably Ruy Ramos and Kazuyoshi Miura, are determined that Verdy should remain a "Brazilian" side. But it is a funny way to run a football club.

The inevitable result was that Verdy's formation broke down, but they had enough in reserve to beat Kashima who were reduced to 10 men after the dis-

Champions . . . Verdy Kawasaki players receive the J.League Suntory Championship.

Kiyokumo joins JEF

JEF UNITED Ichihara became the latest J.League side to appoint a new manager, following the arrival of Gordon Milne at Nagoya Grampus Eight at Kenzo Yokoyama at Urawa Red Diamonds.

JEF's choice to replace Yoshikazu Nagai is Eijun Kiyokumo, who served as Hans Ooft's chief coach to the Japan national team. Forty-three year old Kiyokumo, one of the most personable figures in Japanese football, is a former national team player.

JEF's fortunes took a sharp downturn towards the end of the season, as the club became a first-half-only team. More precisely, Pierre Littbarski turned into a first half only player.

JEF have again gone shopping in the Bundesliga. The latest to join Littbarski and Frank Ordenewitz is New Zealander Wynton Rufer from Werder Bremen. Rufer was top scorer for Bremen with 17 goals in 1992-93.

Sanfrecce Hiroshima have signed the experienced 30-year-old Czech midfielder Ivan Hasek from Strasbourg. Hasek, with 56 caps, replaces American Daniel Calichman, who was released in December.

Gamba Osaka have also been active, signing two Ukrainians; 29-year-old former Soviet national striker Oleg Protasov and 27-year-old CIS defender Akhrik Tsveiba. They join Bulgarian Kiril Metkov and Byelorussian Sergei Aleinikov at the club.

Gamba have released veteran Chinese sweeper Jia Xiuquan and also Brazilian Miguel Luiz Muller, who has been transferred to Kyoto Purple Sanga of the Japan Football League.

Gamba are also poised to transfer ace Japanese striker Akihiro Nagashima to Shimizu S-Pulse, who sorely lacked a consistent goalscorer this season. It is known that there was friction between Nagashima and manager Kunishige Kamamoto.

Kamamoto is expected to use the money to buy unsettled young Nagoya Grampus Eight striker Yasuyuki Moriyama, who will thus join former high school team-mate Hiromitsu Isogai at Gamba.

Bellmare Hiratsuka, promoted to the J.League, have acquired 25-year-old winger Almir from Santos. Almir debuted for Brazil in 1991. The fee is thought to be around £1.2million.

Shimizu S-Pulse have signed 28-year-old Brazil national team and Sao Paulo defender Ronaldo, who played in December's World Club Cup against Milan. Shimizu are also negotiating with Palmeiras centre-forward Evair. Manager Leao is releasing Edu and Marcao, but keeping Toninho; who missed most of the season through injury, and goalkeeper Gilmar.

Julilo Iwata have signed Japan national team defender Toshinobu Katsuya from Yokohama Marinos. Yokohama Flugels are talking with Liverpool's Israeli striker Ronny Rosenthal and have already contracted with Brazilian international Valber da Silva Costa from Corinthains. Kyoto Purple Sanga,

EMPEROR'S CUP
Quarter-finals
SUNDAY DECEMBER 19
KASHIMA ANTLERS 5 (Alcindo 39, 70, Hasegawa 49, 100, Kurosaki 92)
NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT 3 (Moriyama 6, Mori 25, Asano 35). **Att:** 10,409.
JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 1 (Pavel 89)
SHIMIZU S PULSE 2 (Sawanobori 83, Hasegawa 117). **Att:** 21,000.
YOKOHAMA MARINOS 1 (Miura 28)
SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 3 (Cerny 38, 79, Shima 53). **Att:** 12,065.
YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 2 (Maezono 38, Maeda 61)
VERDY KAWASAKI 1 (Miura 44). **Att:** 27,947.
Semi-finals
THURSDAY DECEMBER 23
KASHIMA ANTLERS 1 (Akita 59)
SHIMIZU S PULSE 0. **Att:** 49,623.
YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 2 (Maeda 61, Moner 97)
SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 1 (Noh 88). **Att:** 36,861.
Final
SATURDAY JANUARY 1, 1994
YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 6 (Edu 44 pen, 63 pen, Watanabe 112, Amarilla 115, 118, Sorimachi 119)
KASHIMA ANTLERS 2 (Kurosaki 6, Okuno 89). **Att:** 53,354.

J.LEAGUE SUNTORY CHAMPIONSHIP
At National Stadium, Tokyo
1st leg
SUNDAY JANUARY 9
VERDY KAWASAKI 2 (Miura 60, Bismarck 89)
KASHIMA ANTLERS 0. **Att:** 53,553.
2nd leg
SUNDAY JANUARY 16
VERDY KAWASAKI 1 (Miura 82 pen)
KASHIMA ANTLERS 1 (Alcindo). **Att:** 53,010.
Verdy won 3-1 on aggregate

missal of Okuno in the 27th minute.

Goals by Miura, who also missed a penalty, and Bismarck gave Verdy a lead they were not to relinquish in the second leg.

Kashima came out purposefully for the second game, Zico returning to support Kurosaki and Alcindo in attack, while Masatada Ishii was masterful in left midfield.

Kashima were rewarded in the 38th minute when Alcindo chested down and volleyed home a long header from Akita.

But it all fell apart from the 56th minute when gamemaker Ishii was hurt in a collision and had to go off.

Verdy got a penalty from an 80th-minute foul by Eiji Gaya on Paulo. The Kashima players thought it was an obstruction at worst, and none were more angry than Zico.

As Miura was about to take the kick, Zico walked forward and spat on the ball. With that gesture, he expressed his contempt for Japanese referees in general, whom he persists in accusing of favouring Verdy. The protest earned his second booking and marching orders, Kashima's third sending-off in three games.

For Zico, it was a sad and irrational way to end a season that started so well with a hat-trick against Grampus Eight in May.

The season's awards meant that Kazuyoshi Miura (Verdy) was again named player of the season. Sanfrecce Hiroshima won the fair play award. Ramon Diaz (Marinos) was top scorer with 28 goals. And Shizuo Takada, Zico's adversary at the weekend, was named best referee of the year.

besides purchasing Muller from Gamba, have secured the services of Argentinian defender Marcelo Trivisonno from Urawa Red Diamonds and former Uruguay captain Javier Ostolaza. And Verdy Kawasaki have extended Bismarck's contract.

Kashima Antlers have appointed Zico's elder brother, Edu, as head coach. It appears that Zico is passing on the baton.

Yokohama Marinos, who already have Argentinian stars Ramon Diaz and Zapata, are negotiating with another River Plate and current Argentinian national team player, Ramon Medina Bello.

In other news, Yokohama Marinos have withdrawn from the Asian Cup-winners Cup semi-final against South China of Hong Kong because delays to that fixture have pushed the tournament too far outside the Japanese season.

It is hoped that their decision will not lead to a ban on Yokohama Flugels' participation next season. Verdy Kawasaki, though staying in the Asian Champions Cup, are sending the reserves to the final tournament in Bangkok.

MIKE PLASTOW & MICHI ISHIJIMA

SOUTH PACIFIC MINI GAMES

TAHITI can again claim to be the top team among the small island nations of the Pacific (and, therefore, number three in Oceania) after beating Fiji 3-0 in the South Pacific Mini Games final in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

The match presented contrasting styles, with the Tahitians adopting a fluid, short-passing game and Fiji relying almost exclusively upon long passes from midfield aimed towards a lone central striker. In this instance, the former was far more effective.

Strikers Reynald Temarii and Loi Gong harassed the Fijian defence throughout, but almost an hour had elapsed before the first goal was scored. Intercepting a wayward pass in his own half, Temarii took the ball unchallenged almost 50 metres upfield before finding Jean Labaste Hiro who easily beat goalkeeper Losefo Vosoboto from close range.

Ten minutes later, Temarii again created havoc. Running on to Lei's shrewd free kick inside the penalty area, the ex-FC Nantes player shrugged off one tackler before producing a fierce shot which Fijian defender Mosese Jese deflected past the hapless Vosoboto.

Lei added another in the last minute, ending a fine six-man move, completely bemusing the Fijians with a crisp shot into the roof of the net.

SINGAPORE

GEYLANG INTERNATIONAL are Singaporean League champions for the sixth time. Their unbeaten record (12 wins and one draw from 13 games) put them beyond the reach of a tenacious Tiong Bahru by the penultimate round.

Outstanding throughout the season for the champions were their two imports, Czech Michael Vana and Zlatko Vidan from Croatia, and the country's most famous player, Fandi Ahmad, who returned home last year after a lengthy professional career in Holland (with FC Groningen) and Malaysia.

Much less clear cut was the appointment of a national team coach to replace Pin Sivaji. First-choice Mike Brown, who guided Pahang to a League and Cup double in Malaysia two years ago, turned down the job. Instead, he became Phil Neal's assistant at Coventry in his native England.

Then Dutchman Robert Alberts, coach of Singapore's Malaysia Cup final conquerors Kedah, rejected an offer for financial reasons. The Football Association of Singapore turned next to Alan Vest — an Englishman who already had a proven track record in New Zealand and Australia before building the best team to represent the East Malaysian soccer backwater of Sarawak. But he, too, declined to move.

Next on the list was Ken Worden, the Malaysian national team coach until January. Much to the FAS's relief, the 50-year-old Australian quickly agreed terms and he is now preparing for the inaugural Malaysian Super League which begins in April.

India pay penalty

BOASTING a quarter of the global population, there is no obvious reason why South Asia should be the world's weakest footballing region.

Teams from the wider Indian sub-continent have never reached the World Cup finals or even come close in the qualifiers. India, the region's leading team, scrapes in at 99th place on the latest FIFA rankings (tied with tiny Burundi).

This weakness was clearly demonstrated at the sixth South Asian Games recently held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In the final, a plucky and determined Nepal beat India 4-3 in a penalty shoot-out following a surprisingly entertaining 2-2 draw.

In the 87th minute, while 2-1 ahead, a careless foul 20 yards out threw a late lifeline to Nepal as Mani Shah scored. Worse was to follow in the penalty shoot-out as India, 3-1 up, proceeded to miss the last three spot-kicks which Nepal converted for a surprise win.

The quality of the football was generally poor. Group B produced only a single goal in the three matches. Hosts Bangladesh, coached by Swiss-Czech Oldrich Svab, had been tipped to do well but a opening draw with the Maldives (South Asia's equivalent of the Faroe Islands) left them exposed to a late strike by Nepal's Basantha Gurung in the second game and massive national disappointment and soul-searching.

Group A was much livelier. In the opener, reigning champions Pakistan were edged out 2-1 by Brazilian-coached Sri Lanka, with Ranaweera scoring both. Twice-winners India are always a force in these competitions, disposing of Sri Lanka (2-0) and sharing the honours with deadly rivals Pakistan in a 2-2 draw. Sri Lanka gained some consolation by taking the bronze with a 3-1 win over Maldives.

Even in the sub-continent, population size is no guide to success. Little Nepal overshadowed its populous neighbours with a robust and committed playing style. With flowing long hair and wearing light blue boots, the red-shirted Himalayans also introduced a welcome non-conformity onto the pitch.

With everyone rooting for the underdog against regional superpower India, their's was a popular victory, their second since winning the inaugural tournament on home soil in 1984. But on this evidence, soccer in teeming South Asia will continue to lag behind the rest of the world.

ALLEN ARMSTRONG

HONG KONG

Scare for Eastern

EASTERN'S quest for a clean sweep of Hong Kong's four major trophies almost ended at the first hurdle.

Successful in three competitions last season and winners of their first seven league games. Eastern went into the Challenge Shield final against Instant Dict as firm favourites, only to twice fall behind to goals by Graham Harvey.

But equalisers from Dale Tempest and Tim O'Shea salvaged a draw in regular time for Eastern, who won the penalty shoot out 4-3.

The determination of Instant Dict's challenge was not a total surprise. Before the match they had pledged to win the Shield on behalf of former teammate Ceung Yuk-sang, whose career had been terminated a few weeks earlier by an injury sustained in an off-the-ball incident.

Cheung alleges that ex-Newcastle United and Hull City striker Billy Whitehurst, now with Voicelink, caused the partial paralysis on the left side of his body when elbowing him in the neck. But he declined to take legal action against Whitehurst.

Slater on top

FOR the first time, an Oceania Footballer of the Year has won his award due to performances at home rather than achievements in a European league.

The exceptional form displayed by Robbie Slater during Australia's World Cup qualifying campaign gained the FC Lens (France) striker 72 votes and a record margin of 19 over the runner-up, Wynton Rufer of Werder Bremen and New Zealand. Ned Zelic (Borussia Dortmund and Australia) was third.

PAUL MOON

RESULTS *Liverpool and Manchester Utd draw 3-3 . . . Feyenoord beat Venlo 5-0 . . .*

EUROPE

BELGIUM

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

WEEKEND

BELGIAN CUP — 5TH RND

CLUB BRUGGE 3
STANDARD LIEGE 2

EKEREN 4
SERAING 1

ANTWERP 3
LOKEREN 0

BEERSCHOT 2
WAREGEM 1

RWDM 1
OOSTENDE 1
RWDM won 4-2 on pens

HEIRNIS GAND 1
LOMMEL 2

CHARLEROI 5
GEEL 1

HARELBEKE 0
ANDERLECHT 3

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

WEEKEND

GENT 1 (Viscal 56)
ANTWERP 2 (Lehnhoff 2, Pote 24). **Att:** 6,200.

CHARLEROI 3 (Brogno 25, Misse-Misse 67, 73)
RWDM 2 (Van Der Missen 61, Williams 63). **Att:** 12,000.

STANDARD 2 (Cruz 35, 72)
GENK 0. **Att:** 8,000.

LIERSE 1 (Selders 63)
SERAING 1 (Olivieri 90). **Att:** 5,000.

LOMMEL 1 (Buana 88)
LIEGE 2 (Crapa 34, Arnold 67). **Att:** 5,400.

ANDERLECHT 6 (Nilis 16, Bosman 42, 54, 88, Zetterberg 51, Walem 64)
WAREGEM 1 (Kruzen 27). **Att:** 14,000.

CLUB BRUGGE 2 (Vermandt 44, Verheyen 81)
BEVEREN 1 (Janssen 62). **Att:** 8,000.

EKEREN 0
MECHELEN 2 (Sanders 44, Janssen 78 og). **Att:** 6,000.

OOSTENDE 1 (Pinson 44)
CERCLE BRUGES 1 (Weber 84). **Att:** 6,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

WEEKEND

GENK 0
LIERSE 3 (Serneels 3, 39, Pauwels 65). **Att:** 4,000.

SERAING 1 (Edmilson 86)
LOMMEL 0. **Att:** 7,000.

LIEGE 1 (Milosevic 38)
ANDERLECHT 2 (Albert 3, Bosman 3). **Att:** 12,000.

WAREGEM 2 (Bossuyt 8, Descamps 84)
GENT 2 (Viscaal 38, 70). **Att:** 6,500.

ANTWERP 0
CERCLE BRUGES 3 (Marteanu 15, 83, Weber 67). **Att:** 6,000.

CLUB BRUGGE 1 (Eykelkamp 87)
OOSTENDE 0. **Att:** 12,000.

MECHELEN 1 (Arambasic 19)
CHARLEROI 3 (Van Meir 51, Balog 68, Misse-Misse 85). **Att:** 9,200.

RWDM 1 (Wuyts 69)
STANDARD 0. **Att:** 4,000.

BEVEREN 3 (Volckerick 41, Udovic 72, Van Haan 78)
EKEREN 1 (Van Straten 80). **Att:** 6,000.

ENGLAND

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

MIDWEEK

MAN UTD 3 (Cantona 22, 91, Ince 92)
ASTON VILLA 1 (Cox 93). **Att:** 44,499.

NEWCASTLE 1 (Cole 85)
LEEDS 1 (Fairclough 66). **Att:** 36,388.

WEEKEND

MAN UNITED 1 (Ince 89)
BLACKBURN 1 (Gallacher 16).
Att: 44,511

SHEFFIELD UTD 0
LIVERPOOL 0. **Att:** 22,932.

WIMBLEDON 1 (Holdsworth 38)
COVENTRY 2 (Ndlovu 26, Williams 71). **Att:** 4,739.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

MIDWEEK (MONDAY, DECEMBER 27)

SWINDON 0
ARSENAL 4 (Campbell 19, 26, 68, Wright 89). **Att:** 17,651.

TOTTENHAM 1 (Barmby 74)
NORWICH 3 (Sutton 27, 90, Ekoku 36). **Att:** 33,130.

QPR 2 (White 56, Penrice 71)
OLDHAM 0. **Att:** 13,218.

EVERTON 0
SHEFFIELD WED 2 (Bright 35, Palmer 44). **Att:** 16,777

IPSWICH 1 (Linighan 36)
WEST HAM 1 (Chapman 77). **Att:** 21,024.

SOUTHAMPTON 3 (Widdrington 29, Dowie 66, Bennett 88)
CHELSEA 1 (Stein 40). **Att:** 14,221.

MIDWEEK

OLDHAM 2 (Sharp 15, Holden 26)
MAN UTD 5 (Kanchelskis 4, Cantona 19 pen, Bruce 39, Giggs 53, 59). **Att:** 16,708.

LEEDS 1 (Hodge 72)
QPR 1 (Meaker 62). **Att:** 39,106.

BLACKBURN 2 (Shearer 24, 42)
EVERTON 0. **Att:** 21,462.

ARSENAL 3 (Campbell 11, 55, Wright 40)
SHEFFIELD UTD 0. **Att:** 27,035.

CHELSEA 1 (Stein 11)
NEWCASTLE 0. **Att:** 22,133.

NORWICH 1 (Sutton 26)
ASTON VILLA 2 (Houghton 56, Saunders 59). **Att:** 20,650.

LIVERPOOL 1 (Scales 29 og)
WIMBLEDON 1 (Fashanu 40). **Att:** 32,232.

SHEFFIELD WED 3 (Bright 8, Watson 67, 70)
SWINDON 3 (Mutch 5, Maskell 19, 90). **Att:** 30,570

WEST HAM 1 (Holmes 11)
TOTTENHAM 3 (Dozzell 34, Hazard 42, Anderton 77). **Att:** 20,787.

MAN CITY 1 (Phelan 29)
SOUTHAMPTON 1 (Dowie 26). **Att:** 24,712.

WEEKEND

MAN UTD 0
LEEDS 0. **Att:** 44,724.

ASTON VILLA 0
BLACKBURN 1 (Shearer 38). **Att:** 40,903.

WIMBLEDON 0
ARSENAL 3 (Campbell 18, Parlour 23, Wright 55). **Att:** 16,584.

NEWCASTLE 2 (Cole 28, 45)
MAN CITY 0. **Att:** 35,658.

SOUTHAMPTON 0
NORWICH 1 (Sutton 44). **Att:** 16,556.

IPSWICH 1 (Marshall 75)
LIVERPOOL 2 (Ruddock 57, Rush 88). **Att:** 22,355.

QPR 1 (Ferdinand 69)
SHEFFIELD WED 2 (Bright 78, Watson 79). **Att:** 16,858.

EVERTON 0
WEST HAM 1 (Breacker 5). **Att:** 19,579.

TOTTENHAM 1 (Caskey 43)
COVENTRY 2 (Babb 25, Wegerle 77). **Att:** 26,015.

SHEFFIELD UTD 2 (Whitehouse 23 pen, Ward 32)
OLDHAM 1 (Jobson 45). **Att:** 17,066.

SWINDON 1 (Mutch 90)
CHELSEA 3 (Shipperley 18, Stein 44, Wise 89). **Att:** 16,456.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

MIDWEEK *(MONDAY, JANUARY 3)*

ARSENAL 0
QPR 0. **Att:** 34,935.

CHELSEA 4 (Burley 22, Stein 40 pen, 88, Shipperley 62)
EVERTON 2 (Cottee 46, Barlow 55). **Att:** 18,338.

COVENTRY 1 (Wegerle 73)
SWINDON 1 (Mutch 89). **Att:** 15,825.

MAN CITY 2 (Ingebrigtsen 4, Vonk 30)

So close . . . McGinlay of Bolton misses in the last minute of the 1-1 FA Cup draw against Everton

IPSWICH 0. **Att:** 20,000.
Abandoned after 40 minutes

SHEFFIELD WED 1 (Bright 5)
TOTTENHAM 0. **Att:** 32,514.

WEST HAM 0
SHEFFIELD UTD 0. **Att:** 20,365.

MIDWEEK

LIVERPOOL 3 (Clough 25, 38, Ruddock 79)
MAN UTD 3 (Bruce 9, Giggs 20, Irwin 24). **Att:** 42,795.

NORWICH 1 (Bowen 4)
NEWCASTLE 2 (Beardsley 20, Cole 80). **Att:**19,564.

WEEKEND

FA CUP — 3RD ROUND

BARNET 0 CHELSEA 0

BIRMINGHAM 1 KIDDERMINSTER 2

BLACKBURN 3 PORTSMOUTH 3

BOLTON 1 EVERTON 1

BRISTOL CITY 1 LIVERPOOL 1
Abandoned after 65 minutes

BROMSGROVE 1 BARNSLEY 2

CARDIFF 2 MIDDLESBROUGH 2

CHARLTON 3 BURNLEY 0

EXETER 0 ASTON VILLA 1

GRIMSBY 1 WIGAN 0

LEEDS 3 CREWE 1

MAN CITY 4 LEICESTER 0

NEWCASTLE 2 COVENTRY 0

NOTTS CO 3 SUTTON UTD 2

OLDHAM 2 DERBY CO 1

OXFORD 2 TRANMERE 0

PETERBORO 1 TOTTENHAM 1

PLYMOUTH 1 CHESTER 0

PRESTON 2 BOURNEMOUTH 1

SHEFFIELD WED 1 NOTTM. FOREST 1

SOUTHAMPTON 1 PORT VALE 1

STOCKPORT 2 QPR 1

STOKE 0 BATH CITY 0

SUNDERLAND 1 CARLISLE 1

SWINDON 1 IPSWICH 1

WEST HAM 2 WATFORD 1

WIMBLEDON 3 SCUNTHORPE 0

WOLVES 1 CRYSTAL PALACE 0

WYCOMBE 0 NORWICH 2

SHEFFIELD UTD 0 MAN UTD 1

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

MIDWEEK

FA CUP — 3RD ROUND

MILLWALL 0
ARSENAL 1

COCA-COLA CUP — QUARTER-FINALS

MAN UTD 2 (Giggs 29, Cantona 60)
PORTSMOUTH 2 (Walsh 32, 71). **Att:** 43,794.

TOTTENHAM 1 (Caskey 64)
ASTON VILLA 2 (Houghton 57, Barrett 69). **Att:** 31,408.

NOTTM F. v TRANMERE — *postponed.*

WIMBLEDON 1 (Holdsworth 77)
SHEFFIELD WED 2 (Watson 46, Bright 82). **Att:** 8,784.

WEEKEND

TOTTENHAM 0
MAN UTD 1 (Hughes 49). **Att:** 32,343.

SHEFFIELD UTD 1 (Scott 18)
BLACKBURN 2 (Shearer 36,64). **Att:** 19,124.

MAN CITY 0
ARSENAL 0. **Att:** 25,642.

LEEDS 0
IPSWICH 0. **Att:** 31,317.

QPR 1 (Penrice 20)
NEWCASTLE 2 (Clark 5, Beardsley 63). **Att:** 15,774.

OLDHAM 0
LIVERPOOL 3 (Dicks 47, Fowler 53, Redknapp 80). **Att:** 14,573.

NORWICH 1 (Ekoku 59)
CHELSEA 1 (Stein 42). **Att:** 19,472.

WIMBLEDON 2 (Ardley 12, Fashanu 42)
SHEFFIELD WED 1 (Pearce 67). **Att:** 5,536.

ASTON VILLA 3 (Richardson 15, Atkinson 43, 68)
WEST HAM 1 (Allen 30). **Att:** 28,869.

SOUTHAMPTON 1 (Le Tissier 44 pen)
COVENTRY 0. **Att:** 12,397.

EVERTON 6 (Ebbrell 4, Cottee 42, 84, 89 pen, Ablett 71, Beagrie 90)
SWINDON 2 (Moncur 56, Bodin 61). **Att:** 20,546.

HOLLAND

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

MIDWEEK

TWENTE 0
PSV 0. **Att:** 10,987.

CAMBUUR 1 (Monterman 50)
RKC 1 (Decheiver 42 pen). **Att:** 5,000.

VITESSE 3 (Gillhaus 43, Cocu 80, Laamers 89)
NAC BREDA 1 (Van Hooijdonk 68).
Att: 5,762.

SPARTA 4 (Bogarde 34, Krijgsman 45, 77, 84)
VOLENDAM 1 (Wasiman 58). **Att:** 2,500.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

WEEKEND

WILLEM II 4 (Van Eck 10 og, Sylla 20, 58, 85)
SPARTA 1 (Van Hintum 54 pen). **Att:** 6,700.

HEERENVEEN 0
VITESSE 4 (Cocu 21, 83, Helder 53, MacKaay 74). **Att:** 13,200.

GA EAGLES 0
PSV 4 (Numan 23, 65, Kieft 57, Lamptey 89). **Att:** 7,500.

NAC BREDA 2 (Lokhoff 71, Van Hooijdonk 88)
CAMBUUR 0. **Att:** 9,334.

AJAX 4 (Rijkaard 20, Bling 32, Litmanen 73, Overmars 82)
MVV 1 (Roelofsen 26). **Att:** 19,197.

GRONINGEN 4 (Hamming 2, 19, 88, Roossien 56)
UTRECHT 1 (Kelders 72). **Att:** 10,483.

VOLENDAM v RODA JC — *postponed*

FEYENOORD 5 (Van Loen 19, Kiprich 55 pen, 80, Metgod 68 pen, Obiku 89)
VENLO 0. **Att:** 25,697.

TWENTE 2 (Vurens 51, 90)
RKC 1 (Peelen 28). **Att:** 4,600.

PORTUGAL

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

WEEKEND

PORTUGUESE CUP — 4TH RND

MARTIMO 0
ESPINHO 1

AMADORA 3
OPERARIO 1

BELENENSES 2
SAN JOANENSE 0

FAMALICAO 1
LUSITANO EVORA 0

BEIRA-MAR 0
LUSITANIA 1

SPORTING LISBON 2
SPORTING BRAGA 1

TIRSENSE 1
BOAVISTA 0

CONTINUED PAGE 62

MADEIRA 1
BENFICA 5

VITORIA SETUBAL 4
INFESTA 0

VIERA 0
SALGUEIROS 3

QUIMARAES 1
FC PORTO 2

LEIXOES 0
CHAVES 2

TORRIENSE 1
RIO AVE 1

AVES 2
CALDAS 1

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

MIDWEEK

UNIAO MADEIRA 2 (Robert 2, Manu 19)
BOAVISTA 1 (Luciano 89). **Att:** 6,700.

WEEKEND

BOAVISTA 1 (Sanchez 47)
FC PORTO 1 (Kostadinov 25).
Att: 15,000.

GUIMARAES 2 (Pedro 10, Ziad 85)
ESTORIL 0. **Att:** 7,500.

GIL VICENTE 1 (Mangonga 78)
BEIRA-MAR 1 (J. Silverio 39).
Att: 5,000.

UNIAO MADEIRA 0
BENFICA 2 (Isaias 21, Ailton 30).
Att: 10,000.

SPORTING LISBON 1 (Iordanov 78)
MARITIMO 1 (P. Alves 57). **Att:** 15,000.

SALGUEIROS 3 (Rui Alberto 10, 16, 31)
FARENSE 1 (Djukic 12, Hassan 19).
Att: 4,000.

AMADORA 2 (Calado 27, Fernando 46)
FAMALICAO 0. **Att:**4,000.

SETUBAL 3 (S. Araujo 24, Yekini 41, Helio 86)
PACOS FERREIRA 0. **Att:** 5,000.

BELENENSES 0
SPORTING BRAGA 0. **Att:** 3,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

MIDWEEK

FC PORTO 4 (Timofte 36,39, Joao Pinto 41, F. Conto 84)
UNIAO MADEIRA 1 (Herme 10).
Att: 10,000.

WEEKEND

ESTORIL 0
BOAVISTA 2 (Sanchez 7, Artur 33).
Att: 5,500.

BENFICA 0
GIL VICENTE 0. **Att:** 20,000.

MARITIMO 3 (Alex 18, 40, Ademir 32)
UNIAO MADEIRA 2 (Mano 60, P. Paulo 69). **Att:** 15,000.

FAMALICAO 1 (J. Mario 81)
SPORTING LISBON 1 (Juskoviak 65).
Att: 5,000.

SPORTING BRAGA 0
AMADORA 1 (Ricardo 66). **Att:** 1,500.

PACOS FERREIRA 1 (J. Batista 25)
BELENENSES 1 (Edmilson 85).
Att: 6,000.

FARENSE 1 (Stevanovic 83)
FC PORTO 0. **Att:** 10,000.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

WEEKEND

BOAVISTA 2 (Nogueira 13, Owubokiri 79 pen)
BEIRA-MAR 1 (Draskovic 19).
Att: 10,000.

GUIMARAES 1 (Ziad 90 pen)
BENFICA 2 (Paneira 33, Ailton 44).
Att: 16,300.

GIL VICENTE 1 (Cacioli 28)
MARITIMO 0. **Att:** 83,000.

UNIAO 0
FAMALICAO 0. **Att:** 9,000.

SPORTING LISBON 2 (Balakov 30, Juskowiak 44)
SPORTING BRAGA 0. **Att:** 7,000.

AMADORA 3 (Caio Jr 19, Mario Jorge 26, Fernando 55)
PACOS FERREIRA 1 (Oliveira 77).
Att: 7,830.

FARENSE 2 (Djukic 34, 55 pen)
SETUBAL 1 (Yekini 26). **Att:** 14,200.

BELENENSES 2 (Goncalves 45 pen, 72 pen)
SALGUEIROS 3 (Milovac 56, Rui Alberto 59, Pedrosa 78). **Att:** 6,600.

SCOTLAND

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

MIDWEEK
(MONDAY, DECEMBER 27)

DUNDEE 0
ABERDEEN 1 (Jess 16). **Att:** 12,067.

HIBERNIAN 5 (Hamilton 41, Farrell 59, Jackson 69 pen, McAllister 72, Wright 82)
PARTICK THISTLE 1 (Tierney 52).
Att: 10,164.

KILMARNOCK v DUNDEE — *postponed*

MOTHERWELL v CELTIC — *postponed*

RAITH v ST JOHNSTONE — *postponed*

RANGERS 2 (Hateley 21, 70)
HEARTS 2 (Millar 10, Robertson 90 pen). **Att:** 45,120.

WEEKEND

KILMARNOCK 0
MOTHERWELL 0. **Att:** 10,510.

DUNDEE v ABERDEEN — *postponed*

CELTIC 2 (Collins 46, Nicholas 81)
RANGERS 4 (Hateley 1, Mikhailichenko 4, 28, Kuznetsov 76).
Att: 48,500.

RAITH v PARTICK — *postponed*

ST JOHNSTONE v DUNDEE UTD — *postponed*

HEARTS v HIBERNIAN — *postponed*

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

MIDWEEK

KILMARNOCK 1 (McSkimming 47)
DUNDEE 0. **Att:** 7,406.

WEEKEND

DUNDEE UTD 3 (Crabbe 3, Connolly 14, Brewster 75)
HEARTS 0. **Att:** 8,583.

ABERDEEN 1 (Shearer 65)
ST JOHNSTONE 1 (Ferguson 60).
Att: 14,000.

HIBERNIAN 2 (McAllister 1, Tortolano 39)
DUNDEE 0. **Att:** 7,415.

PARTICK THISTLE 1 (Shaw 50)
CELTIC 0. **Att:** 13,092.

MOTHERWELL v RAITH — *postponed*

RANGERS 3 (Huistra 69, Hateley 75, 76)
KILMARNOCK 0. **Att:** 44,919.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

MIDWEEK

MOTHERWELL 2 (O'Donnell 44, 59)
CELTIC 1 (McNally 48). **Att:** 13,159.

DUNDEE 0
ABERDEEN 1 (Irvine 69). **Att:** 5,369.

RAITH ROVERS 0
PARTICK 1 (Grant 46). **Att:** 3,599.

ST JOHNSTONE v DUNDEE UTD — *postponed*

HEARTS 1 (Millar 78)
HIBERNIAN 1 (Wright 54).
Att: 24,139.

WEEKEND

KILMARNOCK 0
HIBERNIAN 3 (Farrel 49, Beaumont 51, Evans 54). **Att:** 7,358.

DUNDEE 1 (Wieghorst 34)
RANGERS 1 (Durie 89). **Att:** 11,014.

CELTIC 0
ABERDEEN 0. **Att:** 19,414.
Abandoned after 62 minutes

RAITH ROVERS 0
DUNDEE UTD 2 (Brewster 12, 77).
Att: 5,150.

ST JOHNSTONE v MOTHERWELL — *postponed*

HEARTS 1 (Millar 21)
PARTICK 0. **Att:** 7,619

SOUTH AMERICA

CENTRAL AMERICAN UNION (UNCAF) CHAMPIONS TROPHY
First round — 2nd leg

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

In San Salvador, El Salvador.
MARTE (ES) 2 (Salazar, Martinez)
AURORA (Guat) 1 (Calderon)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Roberto Vicente (Bel).
Marte: Mora, Sanabria, Tejera, Baldizon, Flores, Salazar, Garcia, Galdames, Martinez (Hernandez), Toledo, Arbizu.
Aurora: Hernandez, Davila, Colina, Sandoval, Villavicencio, Giron, Guevara (Calderon), Archila, Castanedo, Huespalo, Machon (Jimenez).
Aurora won 3-2 on aggregate.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS CUP
First round — 2nd leg

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

In Monterrey, Mexico.
MONTERREY (Mex) 3 (Nieves 2, Jauregui)
PETROTELA (Hon) 2 (Duarte, Salas)
HT: 1-0.
Petrotela won 6-4 on aggregate.
In Mexico City.
ATLANTE (Mex) 2 (Herrera, Garcia)
LUIS ANGEL FIRPO (ES) 1 (Toro)
Atlante won 6-2 on aggregate.
● Each team missed a penalty, but Atlante deserved to win.

Second round — 1st leg

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15

AURORA (Guat) 2 (Westphal, Castagnero pen)
LA VICTORIA (Bel) 2 (Pandy, Persburg)
HT: 0-1.
Aurora: Hernandez, Davila, Colina (Calderon), Sandoval, Villavicencio, Giron, Gimenez, Machon, Castagnero, Westphal, De Leon (Pereira).
La Victoria: Ottley, Baragan, Barabona, Usher, Gladden, Madrid, Magana, Vega (Cobb), Munoz (Michad), Pandy, Persburg.

MAJOR CLUB INTERNATIONALS

Dec 17: San Lorenzo (Arg) 2 Univ Catolica (Chi) 1.
Dec 15: Colo Colo (Chi) 5 Argentinos Juniors (Arg) 3.

OTHER INTERNATIONAL

Dec 9: Huracan (Arg) 2 Bolivia Select XI 1.

INTERNATIONAL

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16

Dec 16 = Guadalajara — intl friendly
MEXICO 0
BRAZIL 1 (Rivaldo)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Berni Ulloa.
Mexico: Campos, Herrera, Amriz (Salgado), Nava, Rodriguez, Del Olmo (Hermosillo), Garcia Aspe, Bernal, Galindo (Castaneda), Sanchez, Salvador (Zague).
Brazil: Zetti (Gilmar), Jorginho, Ricardo Rocha, Ronaldo, Dunga, Branco (Leonardo), Renato Gaucho, Dinho, Muller, Pathinha (Alberto), Rivaldo (Sergio).

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22

Dec 22 = Mexico City — intl friendly
MEXICO 0
GERMANY 0
Mexico: Campos, Rodriguez, Ambriz, Ramirez Perales, Ramon Ramirez, Bernal, Patino, Garcia Aspe, Zague, L. Garcia, Del Olmo. (Also played: Castaneda, Galin do, Herrera).
Germany: Illgner, Kohler, Schulz, Strunz, Effenberg, Mathaeus, Sammer, Ziege, Gaudino, Moller, Klinsman, (Also played: Kuntz, Hassler).

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29

Dec 29 = Accra — intl friendly
GHANA 0
EGYPT 0
Att: 10,000

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31

Dec 31 = Accra — intl friendly
GHANA 2 (Amankwah 60, Babido 89)
EGYPT 1 (Abdelghalil 78)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,000

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

Jan 2 = Accra — intl friendly
GHANA 1 (Laud 43)
TUNISIA 1 (Souayah 48pen)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Salomon Iamoa (Gha)
Ghana: E Ansah — Amankwah, B Whyte (Sam Adjei), F Manso, E Ampeah — Affo Dodo, J Acheampong, J Okyere, O Laud (Sam Johnson) — George Arthur, B Obeng (Boateng).
Tunisia: Yazidi — Mizouri, Thabet (Majhoub), Boukadida, Mahjoubi — S Sellimi (Chihi), Gharbi, Souayah (Souissi), Bouzaiena — Limam (Ben Tahar), A Hamrouni.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5

Jan 5 = Bamako — intl friendly
MALI 1 (Abd Traore 60)
BURKINO FASO 1 (Issouf Traore 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,000.
Mali: Farota — Y Diop, Guindo, Dembele, Soul Sangare — A. Traore, B. Traore, B Diawara, I Koita (M Traore) — S Traore, F Coulibaly (A Konate).
B Faso: M Zerbo — Kouada (S Traore), Kamagate, O Coulibaly, A Ouattara — Nagarba, Sourweima, I Traore, T. Tassembedo — S Kone, Z Zebe.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15

Jan 15 = Tempe, Ariz. — intl friendly
UNITED STATES 2 (Balboa 55, Jones 89)
NORWAY 1 (Strandli 44)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,386. **Ref:** Salas (Mex)
US: Meola — Armstrong (Balboa 37), Lapper, Agoos (Burns 72), Lalas, Sorber (Clavijo 81), Dooley, Henderson (Brose 46), Jones, Kinnear (Reyna 61), Moore.
Norway: Grodas — H. Berg, R Johnsen, T Pedersen, Nilsen, Flo (J O Pedersen 58), Mykland (Bohinen 67), Leonhardsen, Rekdal (Runar Berg 84), Frigard, Strandli.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19
Jan 19 = San Diego — intl friendly
COSTA RICA 0
NORWAY 0
Att: 56,222.
Costa Rica: Cubillo (Barrantes 71) — Chaves, Joseph, Marchena — Gomez (Jaikel 35), Jara, Obando, Solis — Astua (Soto 74), Chavarria (Rothe 86), Gutrie (Castro 50).
Norway: Thorstvedt — Haaland, R Nilsen, T Pedersen — Bohinen, Brandesaepher (R Johnsen 23), Mykland, Rekdal (Runar Berg 27) — Friggard, Starvik, J O Pedersen.

Jan 19 = San Diego — intl friendly
BULGARIA 1 (Balakov 78)
MEXICO 1 (Hermosillo 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 56,222.
Mexico: Campos — Ambriz, J R Perales, R Ramirez — Bernal, Del Olmo, Espana — Hermosillo, Patino (Herrera 70), Rodriguez, Salvador.
Bulgaria: Mihakhailov (Popov 51) — Hobchev, Z Yankov, Kremenliev, Urukov — Balakov, Guentchev, Georgiev, Iotov — E Kostadinov, Letchkov.

Jan 19 = Vigo — intl friendly
SPAIN 2 (Salinas 43, Juanele Castano 77)
PORTUGAL 2 (Juan Lopez og 73, Oceano 83pen)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 32,000.
Spain: Zubizarreta — Otero, Alkorta, Voro (Lopez 46) — Larrainzar, Felipe, Nadal (Hierro 46), Guerrero, Camarasa — Fran (Juanele 46), Salinas (Luis Enrique 46).
Portugal: Vitor Baia (Neno 46) — Joao Pinto I (Veloso 46), Fernando Couto, Paulo Sousa (Paulinho Santos 46) — Vitor Paneira, Oceano, Rui Costa, Semedo (Figo 54), Nogueira — Rui Barros, Joao Pinto II (Domingos 54).

Jan 19 = Tunis — intl friendly
TUNISIA 2 (Fawzi Rouissi 11, Ayadi Hamrouni 50)
HOLLAND 2 (Rijkaard 31, R Koeman 55)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 40,000
Tunisia: El Ouaer — Thabet, Hichri, Okbi, Samir Sellimi, Gharbi (Souayeh 74), Maaloul, Ali Mahjoubi, Bouzaiane, Adel Sellimi (Hamrouni 46), Rouissi (Liman 68).
Holland: De Goey — Blind (Winter 32), R Koeman, F De Boer, Rijkaard, Wouters (Jonk 46), Bergkamp (E Koeman 82), Numan, Overmars (Gillhaus 59), R De Boer, Blinker.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22

Jan 22 = Fullerton, Cal — intl friendly
UNITED STATES 1 (Egli 88 og)
SWITZERLAND 1 (Fournier 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,173. **Ref:** Badilla (CR)
US: Friedel — Armstrong, Lapper (Balboa 46), Lalas, Caligiuri, Sorber (Burns 46), Dooley, Michalik (Brose 55), Jones, Perez (Reyna 46), Moore (Vermes 77).
Switzerland: Lehmann — Rueda (Geiger 84), Egli, Studer, Quentin, Sylvestre (Hottiger 67), Bickel, Wyss, Fournier (Bonvin 72), Grassi (Subiat 46), B Sutter.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23

Jan 23 = Riyadh — intl friendly
SAUDI ARABIA 1 (Saeed Oweiran 72)
CHINA 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29

Jan 29 = Seattle — intl friendly
UNITED STATES 1 (Lalas 85)
RUSSIA 1 (Radchenko 52)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 43,651. **Ref:** Sawtell (Can).
US: Meola — Armstrong, Lapper, Lalas, Agoos, Burns, Dooley (Quin 74), Henderson, Jones (Chung 83), Kinnear Moore (Reyna 60).
Russia: Khapov — Gorlukovich, Galiamin, Popov, D. Kuznetsov (Cherishev 74), Tetradze, Tatarchuk (Tadeyev 57), Korneyev (Rashimov), Salenko, Borodiuk, Radchenko.

US Soccer Boom!

Report from the National Soccer Coaches Association of America Convention at Santa Clara, California.

THOSE people arguing with the choice of the US as a proper venue for the 1994 World Cup Finals should have been at Santa Clara, California, in January for the National Coaches Association of America's 47th Annual Convention.

Most of their arguments would have been shot to pieces by an event which brings together thousands of coaches working from youth club level, college and university soccer and top names such as Pele and the Brazilian World Cup coach, Carlos Perreira.

Former West German star Hansi Muller and ex-Liverpool striker Craig Johnston, representatives from the Dutch FA and many ex-pats including former England goalkeeper Tony Waiters were also present.

There was a presentation by Alan Rothenberg, chief of the United States Soccer Federation, outlining plans for the US World Cup Finals as well as the legacy it will leave behind — a pro-league and improved facilities for soccer.

The event itself is designed to allow coaches from differing backgrounds to get together with a mix of technical, social, business and administration activities. Similar events (on a much smaller scale) will be held later this year by our own Association of Football Coaches and Teachers.

Soccer is booming in the US at youth and college level. There are almost as many girls playing the game as boys — the US are the holders of the Women's World Cup.

It is possible, through soccer, to get a college or university scholarship that could be worth over $20,000 a year and the opportunities available in this rapidly developing sport are endless.

Rothenburg, in his presentation, stressed that the World Cup Finals this summer are the start of further events and not a one-off hit. Plans are in hand for a professional league (part funded out of World Cup profits) and investment into more playing fields and facilities.

With the Olympics being held in the US in 1996, the Americans will have a great opportunity to establish soccer as a TV sport and then further expansion should take place. Although recognition, praise and support for the US World Cup has been thin on the ground with many of the critics in this country, it should be remembered that the US national team have defeated England, the Republic of Ireland and Norway.

If people in this country are undecided about the future of soccer in the US, those involved abroad have certainly lent their support. Pele gave a wonderful presentation of his thoughts while appearing in the World Cup Finals of 1958, 1962, 1966 and 1970. His forthright comments, insight into the game and personal references earned this gentleman of soccer a standing ovation.

Carlos Perreira, the manager of Brazil, gave two presentations — one practical, the other a theory session using videos — showing how Brazil prepare their team for international matches and tournaments. These excellent sessions dismissed the "off the cuff" view of Brazilian football.

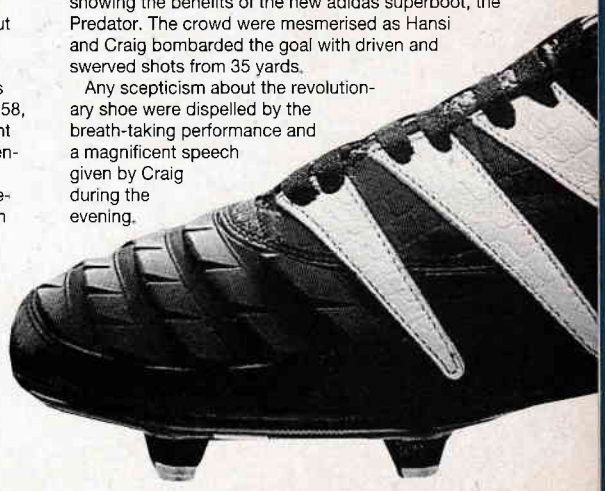
The fitness programmes were extremely thorough and much more detailed and wider ranging than expected. Also the Brazilian style of play, with possession and patience in attack and a flat back-four with zonal defending, proved a real eye opener for those present.

The statements from certain quarters within the English FA "we have nothing to learn from the Brazilians" and "the Brazilians have got it all wrong" were made to look ridiculous by their well thought out presentations.

Tony Waiters, very active in coaching at all levels in North America, gave an insight into his "Micro Soccer" . . . a three v three game system for young players and also participated in several other presentations. It was good to see an English coach abroad speak with such knowledge and from a great platform of experience.

One highlight of the show was the practical performance of Hansi Muller and Craig Johnston who were showing the benefits of the new adidas superboot, the Predator. The crowd were mesmerised as Hansi and Craig bombarded the goal with driven and swerved shots from 35 yards.

Any scepticism about the revolutionary shoe were dispelled by the breath-taking performance and a magnificent speech given by Craig during the evening.



Eight point eye-opener for AFCT

WITH so many different sessions, presentations and displays it was difficult to keep pace with all the events — as well as visiting the excellent trade shows that are a major part of the proceedings.

According to the AFCT's three representatives in Santa Clara, Graham Morgan, Rob Littleford and Jack Detchon, there are eight lessons to be learned from the Convention.

1. Soccer is establishing itself in the US as a booming sport for youngsters — it is challenging basketball as the most popular sport in terms of participation.

2. Soccer is a game for men and women to play, and there is a very strong case for mixed soccer up to the age of 13.

3. Soccer is being welcomed as a vital part of college and university life with opportunities for students and coaches alike.

4. England has a lot to learn from those involved abroad — particularly Brazil and Holland on the evidence of this convention.

5. There is a massive demand for coach education activities that show a broad spectrum of ideas and methods.

6. Soccer's time is coming in the US. Once the current generation of players are given the opportunity to watch soccer on TV and introduce the game to the next generation of players, then those critics at home and abroad will not be able to deny soccer as a major sport in the US.

7. The traditional professional games in the US — American Football, Basketball and Baseball — are not available to the masses. The games are dominated by those with a specific physical build (even a baseball player's average height is over 6'2"). Soccer will give everyone a chance to participate and enjoy the sport.

8. Soccer differs from traditional US sports in another way. As one American put it . . . "it will make a change to see players taking the initiative for themselves. We are fed up with a group of multi-millionaires huddling around a coach who is telling them what they should do for the next eight seconds!"

HOW TO JOIN THE AFCT

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Master Matt

No saint, but a real managerial star

BRIAN GLANVILLE'S
LAST WORD

Respected coach . . . Busby training with some of United's young players in 1961.

THERE must be a very strong case for maintaining that Matt Busby was the most successful English club manager of all time.

Only Bill Shankly and Herbert Chapman can be compared with him. Chapman's achievement matched Busby's, perhaps, in that although he wasn't remotely as long in charge at Arsenal, his reign lasting from 1925 to his sad early death in March, 1934, he took an unfashionable club, not long removed from South-East London to Highbury, and made it into a great innovative one.

One which, like Manchester United, post Busby, and like Liverpool, post Shankly, would continue to be one of the most powerful in the land.

Like Chapman, whom you might jokingly call a premature pro-European, Busby's vision went well beyond these islands. Chapman was a great friend of the two European colossi, Hugo Meisl of Austria and Vittorio Pozzo of Italy.

Busby had the courage, force and good sense to see that United competed in the European Cup when they became the English champions, in 1956.

The previous year, Joe Mears, chairman of Chelsea, member of the Football League management committee, bowed to the demands of the insular if not xenophobe secretary, Alan Hardaker, and did not enter his club for the first of all European Cups.

Matt was having none of that. Strong man in his own club, where the likeable old chairman, former star amateur outside-left Harold Hardman, largely let him get on with it, he effectively told Hardaker and the League to go to the devil, played and flourished. The friendly rivalry with Real Madrid would become a fascinating aspect of world football.

After the horrific Munich air crash of February 1958, Hardaker took a peculiarly foul revenge. United reached the semi-final with their patched-up team. At the end of that season, UEFA generously invited the club to participate again, though not strictly qualified.

On those ostensible grounds, Hardaker and the League objected. The FA overruled them. The League then insisted on a joint appeals committee of FA and FL, and got their mean-spirited way.

Royal Appointment . . . Busby, with wife and son, receives his CBE in 1958 (top).

Chief mourner . . . George Best (above).

Time for tributes . . . beneath the Munich clock at Old Trafford (right).

How lucky I was to see none other than Busby and Shankly play as Scotland's wing-halves in the first professional soccer match I ever watched: England 3, Scotland 0 at a snow-speckled Wembley.

Carefully, I cut out a head and shoulders photo of Busby and stuck it, with others, in my diary. I was never going to forget him.

Like so many professional footballers, he was a PT instructor in the Army. He played as a guest for Reading, so from time to time I had the chance to watch him again.

Taking over Manchester United, when he was demobbed, he found a club with no useable ground, but an abundance of excellent players. This was largely thanks to the efforts of the club's legendary chief scout, Louis Rocca.

Old Trafford had been bombed and was semi-derelict, but with such performers as Johnny Morris (with whom, a rare thing, Busby would fall out), Jack Rowley, once a Buckley babe with Wolves, Stan Pearson, little Henry Cockburn, clever Charlie Mitten, shrewd Johnny Carey, to call on, success was probable, if hardly guaranteed.

Busby's philosophy, of getting good players together and largely letting them do their own thing, worked with his first fine team, and continued to work with his so-called Busby Babes.

Once after a game at Chelsea, in 1952, I asked him what lay behind his policy. "If you don't put them in, you can't know what you've got," he answered, simply and cogently.

The strength, endurance and resilience he learned from his hard early days as a miner, the son of another, doubtless helped him bravely to fight his way back to health after his dreadful injuries at Munich, and to overcome the traumas of a disaster which cost him so many of his much-loved team.

He wasn't a saint. United's youth policy made few friends among rival clubs. What they wanted they usually and ruthlessly got.

When Busby retired, he found it hard to let go, and Wilf McGuinness and Frank O'Farrell suffered accordingly.

His friendship with the ineffable Louis Edwards, who surreptitiously gobbled up enough shares to take command of United, rebounded on him in the end. He felt betrayed and disappointed when his son, Sandy, didn't become a United director.

Matt's problems with George Best were perhaps inevitable. Not only because of the generation gap, but because Matt, essentially a simple and sparsely educated man, had never had such a conundrum to deal with.

But Best was among those in tears when Busby died. He had built one fine team, followed it with another, and when that was destroyed, rose again to make a side which at long last reached the grail of the Champions Cup.

Perfect symmetry.

Banks undervalued

THE announcement of the American Airlines best-ever World Cup 22 has come and gone and I, one of the small original committee, catalyst to the enormous vote, was in Las Vegas for the announcement.

There to hear Gordon Banks tell two beguiling stories. He'd been chosen number two goalkeeper to Lev Yashin which was absurd when Yashin had had at least one disastrous World Cup, in 1962. Though for that matter it was equally daft to put Ferenc Puskas so high in the list when, great player though he was, his 1954 World Cup was blighted by injury and that kick from Werner Liebrich.

Still digressing, you may find it significant that of those who voted, by far the most, 197, were from the US. Scotland, the cradle of the game, supplied . . . nine votes. If there are 197 soccer journalists of perspicacity in the United States, I'd surely like to meet the other 182.

Returning to Banks. He spoke, when we dined in Vegas, of how Alf Ramsey would always thank and shake hands with his team after a game. "Well, see you again," said Gordon. "Will you?" said Alf.

Overlooked . . . England's Gordon Banks.

Then, after Banks made his legendary save from Pele in Guadalajara in 1970, Bobby Moore came up to him, ruffled his hair and said: "Great save, Gordon, but try not to give away needless corners."

The trouble with such largely voluntary and uncontrolled voting is that short memories will prevail. It was good to see votes going to the likes of Meazza, Varela, Andrade, Leonidas, the 1938 Brazilian Black Diamond, but the moderns inevitably predominated. Even if one American journalist, I hear, refused to vote for Maradona . . . on moral grounds!

A to Z OF THE WORLD'S GREAT GROUNDS

By SIMON INGLIS, author of The Football Grounds of Great Britain and The Football Grounds of Europe

GENOA

Name: Stadio Luigi Ferraris (after a former Genoa centre-half killed during World War I), but often called Marassi, after the district
Capacity: 43,868 all-seated
Opened: May 14, 1911, revamped 1946-51 and 1987-90.
Location: A 10-minute walk from the main railway station, along the banks of the Bisagno River, with plenty of bars to refresh you *en route*.

● Warm reddish brown facings and clean-cut, linear blocks make this one of the world's most distinctive and sculpturally modern stadia. Shared by Genoa and Sampdoria and rebuilt completely for the 1990 World Cup, it is quite unlike any other Italian stadium, being squeezed into one inner-city street block between the river, a 14th Century villa, numerous blocks of flats and, for good measure, a prison.

Not surprisingly there was no room for a track and the fans sit close to the touchlines, with corner blocks acting like boxes in a theatre; all perfect were it not for the proliferation of fences, moats and glass screens which force most fans to stand behind each goal.

The hyper-intellectual (and former goalkeeper) architect, Vittorio Gregotti from Milan, also fell out with Genoese city officials over various disputes arising from the design — poor sightlines being a major bug-bear. But if you get the right seat and don't look too closely at the finished details, this is an inspiring delight of a football ground; a true synthesis of modern functionalism and art — a bit of Platt and a bit of Gullit if you like. As one Italian newspaper described it: "Al Ferraris come all'Opera" . . . and you should see the Opera in Genoa!

World Soccer rating: **9 (out of 10)**

GIANTS — NEW YORK/ NEW JERSEY

Name: Giants Stadium
Capacity: 76,891 all-seated
Opened: 1976
Location: East Rutherford, New Jersey — a no-man's land expanse of scrubland 10 miles west of Manhattan and about the same distance north of Newark. Don't even think of walking or public transport. Haven't you seen the movies? Besides, there's a parking lot for 29,000 cars.

● One of the better US stadia built during the 1970s, the two tier but roof-less Giants Stadium is part of the 750-acre Meadowlands Sports Complex which includes a race track and 20,000 capacity indoor arena.

Once home to the New York Cosmos and now to the NFL's New York Giants and NY Jets, it is the only major football stadium in a metropolis of over 8 million!

Despite the New Jersey address, you can just see the Manhattan skyline from the upper deck, which is more than can be said of the corner flags. So keen was FIFA to bring the World Cup here that it has sanctioned a pitch four yards narrower than the international standard. Despite this, the Giants Stadium will stage seven World Cup games on natural turf specially imported to cover the plastic pitch. Don't expect to make a quick post-match getaway. For all its enormous spiral stairways and banks of escalators, if you're parked in the extremities it can take an hour just to get to your car.

World Soccer rating: **8 (out of 10)**

GELSENKIRCHEN

Name: Parkstadion
Capacity: 70,000 (36,000 seats)
Opened: August 4, 1973
Location: If you believe the publicity, in the middle of a park — hence the name. But the park is actually on the other side of the A2 Autobahn and the stadium is in the middle of a vast, bleak car-park, a 20 minute tram ride north of the city centre. Bochum and Essen are part of the same conurbation.

● Before the 1974 World Cup, few non-Germans had ever heard of the industrial Ruhr city of Gelsenkirchen, although football buffs all know the local club, Schalke 04, the miner's team which never quite tunnels its way out of mediocrity, despite huge reserves of support.

The massive, unlovely Parkstadion was thankfully the last of the old traditional superbowls to be constructed in Europe, its banks built up from mining waste, with three sides open to the elements. Now, 20 years on, the Parkstadion is already obsolete, and if the local municipality had not been so short of DMs it would already have replaced the stadium with a smaller, more user-friendly venue next door.

Meanwhile, both Schalke and its fans are waiting to come in from the cold, and UEFA's all-seater ruling has all but been shelved in hard-up Germany. Time for another World Cup bid, methinks.

World Soccer rating: 5 (out of 10)

GOTHENBURG

Name: Ullevi Stadion
Capacity: 40,000 (21,800 seats), reduced from original 52,000
Opened: May 29, 1958, a week before the World Cup
Location: A few hundred metres east of the city centre, about 15 minutes walk from the railway station.

● Instantly recognisable from its undulating cable-suspended roof, the Ullevi (or Temple of the God of Sport) was built for the 1958 World Cup, along with its smaller sister stadium in Malmo.

Stockholm grabbed the final that year, but Gothenburg saw Pele's World Cup debut. The Ullevi also staged Cup-winners Cup Finals in 1983 and 1990 and is now Sweden's largest venue, hence it being preferred for the 1992 European Championship Final.

Though much improved for 1992 — particularly if you like glass-fronted executive boxes which now dominate one side — there's no doubting its 1950's origins. Apart from IFK Gothenburg, the Ullevi also fits in rivals GAIS and, when they have big games, Orgryte IS, thus making this Europe's busiest ground share. There's even a gritty old speedway track.

Overall, a period piece of distinction, if not soul.

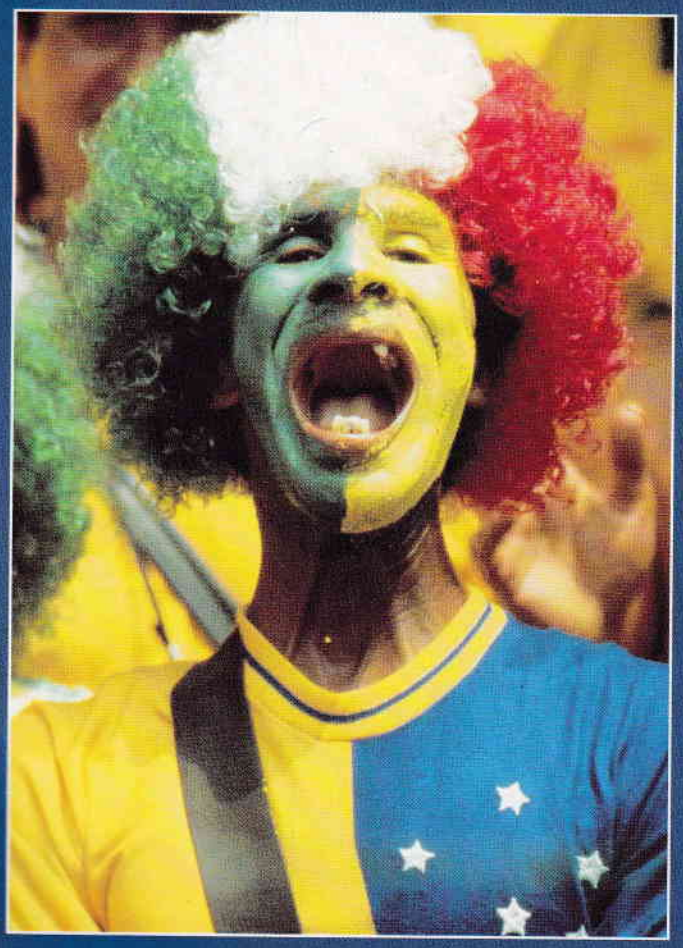
World Soccer rating: 7 (out of 10)

NEXT MONTH IN

WORLD SOCCER

Westward Bound:
Part 2 of the World Cup countdown

COLOMBIA
GERMANY
GREECE
HOLLAND
ITALY
MEXICO



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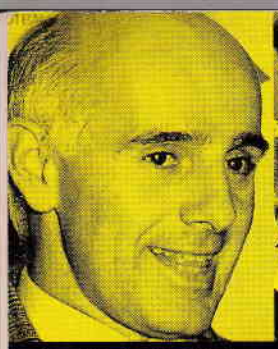
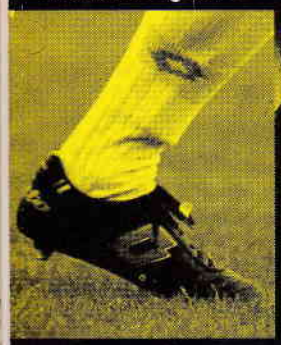

Sacchi, the big chief!

Pagliuca applauds.

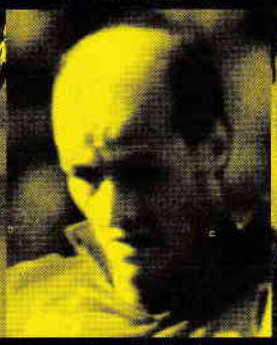
Baiano screams.

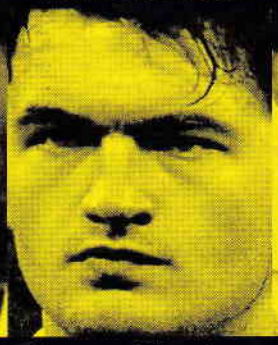
Melli needs a wash.

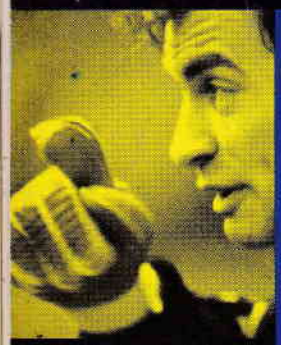
Gullit: the lion.


Albertini's boot.

Rossi: parries or blocks.


Lombardo's locks.


Close-up of Chapuisat.

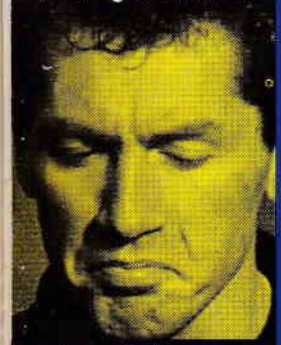

Marchegiani advises.

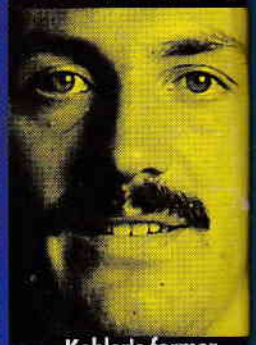
Conte: proud profile.

SOCCER IS LIFE.

65000-

ZanOn


Ferron indignant!


Kohler's former moustache.

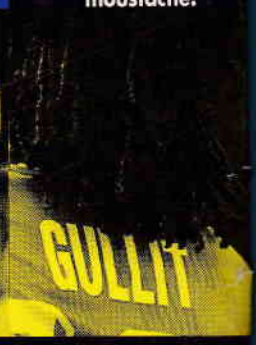
Ielpo's frown.

Who's behind the mask?

Savicevic's stare.

Whose boot?

Fuser out of breath.



Whose back?

Is it Gascoigne?

Albertini in action.

Mannini's nose.

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